

Mrs. May Agnes Fleming's Most Powerful Romance, Next Week!

New York Saturday Journal

A HOME WEEKLY FOR WINTER NIGHTS AND SUMMER DAYS.

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No. 289.

HOW OLD?

BY EBBE E. REXFORD

"How old are you?" A child, whose eyes
Still hold some hint of Heaven's far skies—
Some memory of the life they knew
Ere earth-life dawned upon their view,
Climbed up into my lap to say,
"How old are you?" this winter day.

Dear child, how can I answer you,
And make my answer seem most true?
For if I count my life by years,
And not by sorrow and by tears,
Then I am not so old, to-day,
As some whose youth has slipped away.

But, child, if I should count my life
By sorrow, and by bitter strife,
By tears that fell when dear ones died,
By pain of loss, and love denied,
Oh, child, with hair like morning's gold,
Then I have grown so old!—so old!

DEADLY EYE.

The Unknown Scout:

OR,
THE BRANDED BROTHERHOOD.

BY BUFFALO BILL,
THE CELEBRATED SCOUT, GUIDE, AND HUNTER—
AUTHOR.

CHAPTER VII.

FOR LIFE AND FOR LOVE.

WHEN night settled down upon the emigrant encampment, there were a number of gloomy faces around the impromptu fortifications, and many, both men and women, were sorry that they had ever left their old homes in the Eastern country to seek new ones on the frontier.

Yet, though gloomy, and dreading evil, they were none the less determined to defend their lives and families unto the bitter end, and Major Conrad was glad to see that he could depend upon his command as brave men.

At length the Indians began the attack, and warning to their work, the emigrants grew less despondent, especially after they had several times driven back their red foes with considerable loss, and with no serious result to themselves.

But on crept the weary hours of the night, and one of the teamsters, who had once been an old hunter and trapper, crept out of the camp to reconnoiter, and returned with the evil tidings that the Indians had been reinforced by a large band that had just come up.

Then followed a long season of quiet, and the emigrants felt assured that their enemies were plotting some scheme of devilment against them, and they longed more than ever for the return of the Unknown Scout.

Suddenly there was a scene of commotion in the enemy's lines, rapid firing followed, and the emigrants believed that at last Deadly-Eye had returned and was attacking Red Dick and his villainous crew, with the band of Pawnee braves for whom he had gone in search.

But not that loud and ringing halloo was not from Indian throats, but the hearty cheer of trained soldiers, and the next moment a dark and rapidly-moving mass was seen approaching, and the stern order was heard:

"We are friends; open the barrier!"

"La Clyde! Hurrah! hurrah!" went up from the delighted emigrants, and into the encampment dashed a score of troopers with Captain Percy La Clyde at their head. Warmly were the young officer and his men welcomed, and having listened to the plan of defense adopted by Major Conrad, and stationed his troopers at advantageous positions, the dragoon commander said:

"It is a mere accident I reached you, for after my leaving your train, day before yesterday, on a scout, you changed your course to the southward."

"Yes; that traitor guide, Dick—or rather, Red Dick, as he is known in these parts—"

"What? your guide the famous Red Dick? Now I know why he always seemed to avoid me," said Captain La Clyde, with surprise.

"Yes, he was Red Dick, the renegade leader of a band of Dog Soldier Sioux, I believe."

"Yes, they made him chief of their tribe, major; but what an escape you had, for in changing your course he was doubtless leading you into his hornets' nest."

"It is just what he was doing, and would have succeeded, had not my daughter and Howard Talbot been captured by a band of regular Sioux warriors, and rescued by Deadly-Eye, the Unknown Scout, who informed us of the character of our guide."

"Major Conrad, you surprise me, Miss Sibyl captured, and also Howard Talbot?"

"Yes, captain; they had ridden ahead to look up a camping ground, and—"

"And were captured by Sioux Indians?"

"Yes; five warriors, and four of them the Unknown Scout killed in rescuing Talbot and Sibyl."

"Strange indeed; and he it was who told you of the character of Red Dick?"

"Yes, he exposed the man publicly, and they could have had a knife encounter in camp, had not Sibyl interfered, and then the Scout drove the guide from the encampment,



A dark form gilded forth from the foliage bordering the trail, and stood directly in the pathway of the horseman.

and an hour after Red Dick returned at the head of his Dog Soldiers."

"And what became of the Scout, major?"

"He swam the river, and ran the gantlet of the Indian line most gallantly, that he might seek some friendly Indians and bring them to our aid."

"Major, I am more and more surprised, for let me tell you that the fellow they call Deadly-Eye does not stand well in military circles, as he puts at defiance both officers and soldiers, and some months ago ruthlessly shot down three soldiers who had been sent to arrest him for violating some order. But he has certainly served you well, and I have heard of a number of his noble deeds, and cannot easily connect them with other acts he is reported guilty of; but how are the ladies, major?"

"Stout-hearted as are the men; but come, we will go and see them, captain."

Leading the way, Major Conrad conducted the young officer toward the large ravine running back from the river, and here a motley sight met their gaze, for the women and children were huddled together in the bottom of the gulch, around several bright fires, and further down were closely packed the horses and cattle belonging to the train.

"Why, they are all as snug as bugs in a rug, major," laughed Captain La Clyde, and as the firelight fell full upon him, it displayed his handsome, graceful form, a little under six feet in height, and compactly built.

His face was exceedingly youthful, beardless, and the features handsome, the mouth and dark blue eyes indicating courage and determination.

Clad in the uniform of a captain of cavalry, and with his brown curling hair worn long, and a slouch hat and ostrich plume shading his face, Captain Percy La Clyde looked just what he was, a dashing, handsome, daring soldier, generous to a fault, and ever true in both love and hatred.

The only child of wealthy parents, he had preferred to lead a military life to one of idleness and dissipation, and after a successful career at West Point, had been ordered to the frontier, where he rapidly ascended the ladder of promotion on account of his courage and skill as an officer.

Four days before the caravan reached their encampment on the river, Captain La Clyde had joined them by order of the commandant of Fort Hays, to serve as an escort to the emigrants, and a guard, until they were securely settled in their frontier homes, and a most

pleasant duty had the young officer found that he was detailed upon, for he had fallen desperately in love with Sibyl Conrad, and felt that she was the bright star that was to guide his future destiny.

Bounding down into the ravine, he found a cordial welcome from all; but a shade swept over his face as he beheld Howard Talbot by the side of the maiden he loved.

Percy La Clyde had watched with jealous eye the regard of his rival for Sibyl, and in spite of the many seeming noble qualities possessed by the young man, and his almost universal popularity, he could not like him, and felt for him a distrust he could not overcome.

But then, this might have been on account of his jealous nature, for jealousy always exerts an evil influence upon the person of whom it takes possession.

Yet Sibyl greeted him in a friendly way, and so did Ruth Whitfield, who had always exhibited a warm regard for the young soldier.

After a few words of comfort and hope to those around him, Percy La Clyde said:

"Well, ladies, we must now leave you, for every man must be at his post, and he looked toward Howard Talbot as he spoke; but that young man smiled sweetly, and replied:

"So I think, captain, and should the enemy seek to enter this ravine, I will defend it with my life, for I am stationed here to watch the river approach."

"You cannot see even the water, sir, from your present position; so I would advise that you do a sentinel's duty, as long as you represent one," and Captain La Clyde turned away, while Howard Talbot's face flushed with anger, and Sibyl felt that a storm was brewing, and that she was innocently the cause; but, with a sigh, she consoled herself with the thought that she could not love everybody that loved her; and turned her thoughts upon another, one who was not then in the encampment, but whose return she confidently expected, for her faith in the promise of the Unknown Scout was unbroken.

Returning to the line of fortifications, Major Conrad and Captain La Clyde were surprised and startled by the sound of conflict going on in the enemy's lines, and for which they could not account, unless that the Unknown Scout had returned; but after a moment's attention to the sound, the young officer remarked:

"As I live, they are fighting among themselves—or pretending to, to put us off our guard."

Then all was silent once more, and slowly dragged the moments away, until Major Conrad began to nod with sleep, and feeling anxious about the river front, Percy La Clyde cautiously crept there and reconnoitered.

At first he believed all quiet and safe, but then his quick eye caught sight of a dark mass upon the water.

Closely he watched it, and saw it slowly moving down upon the point near which he stood.

Bounding into the ravine, he startled Howard Talbot, who still remained by the side of Sibyl, with:

"Be good enough, to request Major Conrad to send me thirty men to this point at once; but to create no alarm."

Howard Talbot was off at once to obey the order, although he did not like the tone in which the order had been given; still he felt he had been negligent of his duty, and wished to repair it all in his power.

Ere five minutes had passed the men arrived, headed by Major Conrad, and Captain La Clyde remarked, quietly:

"We are to be attacked by water, it seems; but we have greatly the advantage, so I will only keep my troopers with me, major, and you can return with the remainder of the men, as the attack will doubtless be made at more than this point; and, major, as there is no need of a sentinel here now, perhaps you can find some duty for Mr. Talbot."

Major Conrad and his men returned to their posts, and Captain La Clyde was about to give the order to fire, when all were startled by the discharge of the Branded Brotherhood, which leveled so many of the Dog Soldiers to the ground.

"By Heaven! we have friends near, when we little dreamed of it. Ha! it must be the Unknown Scout, who has kept his word. Ready, men; fire!"

After the order of the young officer, the troopers poured in a rapid fire with their repeating rifles, and Red Dick and his men found themselves under two fires, until, in dismay, they broke and rushed for safety into the river, as soon as the Indian warrior arrived with the news of the massacre of their companions.

Unable to account for the turn in their favor, or why, if friends, they did not make themselves known, Captain La Clyde was about to go outside the fortifications for the purpose of discovery, when he observed a dark form crawling toward the water, and springing down the embankment, he seized him in his powerful arms, and dragged him back.

It was not Indian warrior, with a broken leg, and otherwise wounded; but, speaking the

Sioux tongue fluently, the captain soon learned from him that Ricardo and his Branded Brotherhood were surrounding their encampment, and the treachery of the outlaw chief toward his red allies was also related.

"Well, it is dog eat dog, that's certain. Now that we have Ricardo and his band to fight, we must indeed defend more than our lives," and Percy La Clyde's brow grew dark with dread, for he well knew the desperate courage of the Branded Brotherhood, and the awful fate that would fall upon poor Sibyl and the others, if taken.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEADLY-EYE TO THE RESCUE.

FULLY acquainted with the plan of Ricardo, after his treachery to Red Dick, Captain La Clyde went rapidly around the line and quietly told the men whom they were to fight as their foe, and begged them to steel their hearts against any thought of mercy, and to never yield one inch of ground, for the motto of the Branded Brotherhood was that men must die, and beauty and booty be considered lawful prizes.

Hardly had the young officer made the circuit, when a dark mass of moving horsemen was seen approaching, and a clear voice hailed:

"Well! what would you?" answered Percy La Clyde.

"We have defeated your enemies, and would warn you that we are friends, that you might not fire upon us," replied the same voice that hailed.

"We know no friends in the dark; if you are such as you represent, camp on the river until daylight; if you are enemies, we are ready for you," coolly shouted back Captain La Clyde.

"Charge!" was then yelled forth in the commanding voice of Ricardo, and like a fiery whirlwind the band of outlaw horsemen swept down upon the devoted defenders of the train.

"Throw no shots away, men! Fire!" cried Percy La Clyde, and a line of flame flashed forth from the wagons, and several of the Brotherhood and their horses went down; but from some cause or other the aim of the emigrants had been untrue, and the outlaws pressed fiercely on, filling the air with their discordant cries, every man yelling in his native tongue, until it seemed as if the very fiends from below had burst forth for a gala night.

"Men, be cool; there are devils upon you now, and your aim must be true; you must kill, or all is lost," rung out in the clear tones of Captain La Clyde and Major Conrad; and Howard Talbot, who had thrown off his air of indifference and nobly come to the front, also encouraged the men with voice and gesture.

Then rolled forth a ceaseless roar of firearms, the heavy rush of iron hoofs was heard, and the confused shouts of many voices filled the air, until it seemed the grove was filled with a band of devils holding high carnival.

But unchecked, and with desperate daring and determination, the Brotherhood came on until they dashed their horses against the very line of breastworks, and then their weapons began to tell upon the emigrants, who broke from the fierce fire and fell back, to the horror of Percy La Clyde, who called forth in trumpet voice, "Troopers! rally around your commander! Steady now! charge!"

Gallantly the soldiers did rally around their officer, and dashed forward with him to recover the ground lost by the emigrants; but already had Ricardo bounded on horseback over the barrier, and followed by a dozen of his daring horsemen, dashed at once upon the dismounted troopers, who, in vain attempt to check his mad career, fell beneath the iron hoofs of the outlaws' horses.

"My God! it cannot be that all is lost!" cried Percy La Clyde, in dread, and then, drawing his sword, he shouted:

"Troopers, come on! Men, they are but a handful of murdering thieves; follow me, and drive them back!"

In vain his gallant example and clear commands.

In vain the orders of Major Conrad, who, in a frenzy, strove to stay the torrent of defeat.

In vain the conspicuous courage of Howard Talbot.

Useless the stern discipline and bravery of the troopers; all, all was useless, for from some unaccountable reason, never understood, a panic had seized upon the settlers, brave men though they were, fighting for all they held dear on earth; rapidly they gave ground until two-score of the outlaws had secured a footing within the inclosure, and by the light of the waning moon, which made all around visible, Ricardo was forming his men for a desperate and final charge.

Then his clear voice was heard giving his stern orders, but ere they could be obeyed, there was heard a wild and prolonged war-whoop that made the blood of all who heard it turn cold with dread, and then upon the moonlit scene dashed a single horseman, bounding over the barrier and whirling suddenly into the very midst of the band of outlaws.

"My God! the Unknown Scout!"

"Deadly-Eye!"

"The Scout, and alone!"

It was not Indian warrior, with a broken leg, and otherwise wounded; but, speaking the

Such were the cries that were heard, as with lightning rapidity the daring horseman, with a revolver in each hand, made his shots ring forth with telling effect.

"Not alone! hark!" cried a voice, and a rolling sound like muffled thunder was heard upon the prairie, and again the wild war-whoop of the Unknown Scout broke forth, and was answered from two-score throats by three hearty cheers.

"The troopers! the troopers!" shouted the outlaws, and hastily they turned to fly, Ricardo, with a bitter curse, first spurring toward the Unknown Scout, who wheeled to meet him.

But, as if thinking better of his intention, the outlaw chief suddenly checked his pace, and heading his splendid gray for the barrier, took it with a flying leap and disappeared in pursuit of his men.

Instantly Deadly-Eye followed him, and the two were soon lost to sight upon the prairie in the opposite direction to that from which the cavalry squadron was approaching.

A moment more and they dashed up, headed by Major Belden, one of the senior officers at the fort.

"Major, I greet you; but though too late to join in the fun, you have scared off the enemy," and Percy La Clyde stepped forward and addressed Ernest Belden, a soldierly-looking man of forty, with a handsome, but dark, sinister face.

"Who were your foes, La Clyde?" asked the officer.

"We have had two sets, major; first the Dog Soldier Sioux, under that desperado, Red Dick, and then none other than Ricardo and his desperate band."

"A hard lot indeed, and you have been most fortunate to escape them, and I am glad to see that that reckless Scout told me the truth; but where has he gone?" and the major turned to look for Deadly-Eye.

"Gone like mad after the outlaw chief; but will we not give pursuit, major?"

"No, Captain La Clyde, it would be useless, and I am now destined upon a raid upon the Sioux villages to the northward; so will leave you as soon as day breaks, which will be soon."

A short while longer the conversation continued, and then Captain La Clyde presented his superior to Major Conrad, and also to the ladies, who approached at that moment, and he could not but mark the start of surprised admiration that the major gave when he beheld the beauty of Sibyl Conrad.

Then followed the melancholy duty of caring for the wounded, and burying the dead, until, when the sun arose, it lighted up a sad scene, and the sound of the living wailing for those dear to them, who had fallen, filled the air.

After a hasty breakfast, Major Belden and his troopers departed, leaving Captain La Clyde, as before, to be an escort to the train. Hardly had the forms of the squadron disappeared over a roll in the prairie, when up dashed the Unknown Scout, his horse covered with foam, and showing every indication of a hard ride, as did also his rider, for his face was pale and wore a look of fatigue.

Yet his voice was calm and pleasant, as he replied, in acknowledgment to the cheers that greeted him:

"I thank you, comrades; but I was almost too late, as I had far to ride ere I found aid for you, as the Pawnees had left their hunting grounds; fortunately I met Major Belden, and he was willing to believe me, and come to your succor."

Dismounting, Deadly-Eye devoted himself to the care of his horse, and then, after partaking of a hearty breakfast which Sibyl had prepared for him, threw himself down to rest, and at once was lost in deep and refreshing slumber, while Major Conrad and Captain La Clyde set about their arrangements for continuing their wanderings on the following morning, for they were anxious to get settled in the spot that was to be the new home of the emigrants.

CHAPTER IX.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING AND DISCOVERY.

With the first glimmer of light in the eastern skies, the settlers were astir, and the bugle call of the troopers pierced through the mists.

The Unknown Scout and Prairie Gull appeared to have fully recovered from their hard trip of the past few days, and Deadly-Eye was ever on hand to render the slightest service to Sibyl, or any one else who desired his kind offices.

Between Captain La Clyde and the Unknown Scout a warm friendship had sprung up; for no longer did the young officer appear to have any doubts regarding the noble character of the man whom, in the past, he had both praised and abused.

As regarded Sibyl, she certainly exhibited a most kindly interest in the mysterious rover of the prairies, and with bitter sarcasm for lips so sweet, replied to Howard Talbot's derogatory remarks regarding the man who had certainly served them all so well.

But the fact is, Howard Talbot was deeply in love with Sibyl, and noticing that she most kindly regarded the man whose life was a romance and a mystery, he felt that he had a dangerous rival, and was determined not to yield one atom of any claim he held upon the affection of Sibyl Conrad.

Then again, Ruth Whitfield exhibited a sudden and marked interest in the unknown prairie-man; seemed most anxious to be ever near him; and a shadow would cross her brow whenever Deadly-Eye would turn, with one of his fascinating smiles, and address her lively cousin, for Ruth had a fierce and jealous nature, and could look only unkindly upon one who crossed her path in rivalry.

Thus were matters taking a stormy turn and threatening squally weather for those concerned, for Percy La Clyde was jealous of Howard Talbot, who in turn hated the young officer, but was jealous of the Unknown Scout, in whom both Sibyl and Ruth were more deeply interested than they would admit even to their own hearts.

At length the sun arose beyond the prairie, and slowly the long train of wagons filed out from the mists, with here and there a party on horseback, and took up their march further on toward the setting sun, leaving behind them, within their narrow beds of clay, those who had fallen in the battle the night before.

At the head of the train rode a small cavalcade, consisting of Deadly-Eye, Percy La Clyde, Major Conrad, and the troopers.

The Unknown Scout was acting as a guide for the emigrants toward a point where, he informed them, was one of the most fertile districts on the plains, well watered, and where a settlement would have every advantage that could be found on the frontier.

When Howard Talbot heard Deadly-Eye speak of the point he considered most favorable as a settlement, he instantly remarked that he intended riding on ahead for half a mile.

Arriving himself thoroughly, and declining Gerald Conrad's offer to accompany him, the young pioneer set off, at first keeping only a

short distance ahead, but gradually drawing away from the train, until, when the noonday halt was made, he was nowhere visible upon the prairie.

As if fully acquainted with the country, he put his horse at a rapid gallop, and continued on for miles, until a higher roll in the prairie gave him a view of the river through the green trees of a prairie island.

Toward this point he directed his course until he found himself upon a peninsula, made by the river making a grand curve.

On this point of land, entirely surrounded by water, excepting where it touched the open prairie, had been the home of Alfred Carter, who the night before had been so ruthlessly murdered by the Branded Brotherhood.

A more delightful place could not have been chosen for a settlement, for the point, or peninsula, contained fully five thousand acres of land, of the richest kind of soil, with here and there large timber mottes, and the river bounding it upon three sides, while to the eastward stretched the unbroken prairie for miles, to serve as a luxuriant pasture for stock.

As Howard Talbot rode along the trail leading toward the humble cabin home upon the river-bank, his brow wore a troubled look, and he glanced nervously around him.

Nearer and nearer he drew toward the cabin, but no lazy wreath of blue smoke curled up above the tree-tops, and all seemed strangely desolate around him.

Presently a dark form glided forth from the foliage bordering the trail, and stood directly in the pathway of the horseman, who suddenly reined his steed back with iron grasp as his eyes fell upon the person.

"Red Bud of the Forest, what do you here near the lonely home of the pale-face hunter?" said Howard Talbot, speaking in the language of the Pawnees.

"The Red Bud is a free child of the woods; she asks not the false pale-face brave whether she can go," he haughtily replied the Indian girl.

"The Red Bud turns her eyes with anger upon me; have I offended her?"

"Yes; the Many-Faces has spoken with false tongue to the Red Bud of the Forest. Ere Many-Faces came to the wigwam of the Red Bud, she sung like a bird in the woods, and her heart was like the silvery river; her sorrows were light, only falling upon her as softly as the autumn leaves kiss the ground. But Many-Faces took away the joy of the Red Bud, and the wind sighs nightly in her heart. The Great Spirit frowns at the child of the woods, and the heart of the Indian maid is breaking, and the snow of winter will rest upon her bosom. Many-Faces has a false tongue, and a false light in his eyes, for he told the Red Bud he loved her; he took her from the wigwam of her people, and then left her alone to die. But the Great Spirit would not let her die then, but when she was worn down with hunger, when her feet would not press the earth, and the enemy of her people, the Sioux, would have danced around her scalp, the great white chief, who rides like the prairie whirlwind, and whose eye ever looks death upon his foes, rescued her from her enemies and carried her back to her tribe."

"Was it the Unknown Scout that saved your life, girl?"

"Red Bud has spoken the truth; her tongue is not crooked; it was the stranger Scout that carried her back to the Pawnee village, and he it was that told her that Many-Faces loved a maiden here by the running waters."

"Curses on that Scout! Did you come here to see that maiden?" said Howard Talbot, harshly.

"Red Bud has seen the Rose of the Woodland, and told her not to love Many-Faces."

"By Heaven, girl, you shall die for that!" cried the now aroused man, as he attempted to draw a pistol from his belt; but ere he could do so, Red Bud had unsling a light rifle from her back, and covered him with deadly aim.

"Let not the Many-Faces seek to slay the Pawnee girl, for she would not die by his hand. Her heart is broken, but she will not harm the pale-face chief who broke it. Let him go, and never cross the path of the Forest Red Bud more. Go; the Red Bud bids him go."

Still holding her aim upon his heart, the look of the brave girl proved she was not to be trifled with, and with a bitter curse Howard Talbot drove the spurs into the flanks of his horse and dashed away, leaving Red Bud watching him until he was out of sight.

A rapid ride of five minutes brought Howard Talbot to the cabin door of Alfred Carter; but oh! what a scene met his gaze!

Here and there were scattered numerous pieces of furniture and household effects; the strong door was broken from its hinges, and a scene of desolation was upon all, while blood-stains were upon the floor and ground.

There lay the body of the faithful watchdog, who had died at his post, and a few chickens were roaming disconsolately about.

But nowhere visible were the occupants of the cabin, and the face of Howard Talbot turned pale with dread, as he quickly followed the trail where some heavy objects had been dragged, and a walk of a few hundred yards brought him to a thicket of small timber upon the river-bank, and there he beheld three new-made graves side by side.

"My God! Alfred Carter and all his family gone! No, there are but three graves, and they numbered four."

Yes; Mrs. Carter, Rose, and her brother, lie here, and the father has escaped; or maybe the father lies here, and Rose has been carried off into captivity. A sad sad fate, poor girl; but yet it were better so, and death has saved me a world of trouble, for I wish not two women as rivals in the same settlement. Well, it cannot be helped, and now I am free to marry Sibyl Conrad, if that accursed Scout does not stand between us, and if he does, I must crush him."

With a hard look upon his handsome face, Howard Talbot returned to the cabin, glanced carefully around among the rubbish for a while, and then mounting his horse, rode rapidly away, and making a wide circuit upon the prairie, overtook the wagon-train just as it went into camp for the night, on the edge of the peninsula.

Riding on ahead, the Unknown Scout, accompanied by both Sibyl and Ruth, soon came upon the deserted and desolate cabin home of Alfred Carter, and with a cry of alarm, Deadly-Eye sprang from his horse and entered the little hut.

"All, all gone! In God's name, who has done this foul deed? By the blue heavens above us, I swear that they shall rue this accursed act!"

Never before had the cousins seen Deadly-Eye in any way moved by excitement; but now the look upon his face was terrible, and they almost feared him.

But controlling himself instantly, he said, quietly:

"Miss Conrad, it is due to both yourself and Miss Whitfield that I make known to you the

deed done here. In this cabin home dwelt a man by the name of Alfred Carter, and with him his wife, his daughter Rose—a beautiful girl—and his son. They had not an enemy in the world that I knew of; but, see here, what a heinous deed has been committed!"

Following the same trail that Howard Talbot had, Deadly-Eye soon came to the graves, and then, after examining most carefully the tracks and trails around, as well as he could in the dying light of day, he returned with the maidens to the encampment, and held a long conversation with Major Conrad and Captain La Clyde, who just then came up from a scout with his men.

"Major Conrad, this is the point I have deemed most favorable for your settlement," said Deadly-Eye, at the conclusion of his talk regarding the massacre of the Carter family. "Here you will have every advantage, and be well protected by the river, as you will see in the morning. And I would advise that you at once set about building a stockade fort and wall across this end of the point, and the river, being wide and deep, will protect you upon the three other sides. In a few days I will return and aid you all in my power; but as soon as the moon rises, I will take the trail of the hell-hounds who have brought ruin upon the peaceful family who dwell here."

The Unknown Scout was as good as his word, for as soon as the moon arose and lighted up the prairie, he left the sleeping camp, and struck off over the level plains, slowly following the trail of Ricardo and his band, after their deadly crime against poor Alfred Carter.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 287.)

Idaho Tom,

THE YOUNG OUTLAW OF SILVERLAND;
OR,
The Hunters of the Wild West.

BY OLL COOMES,

AUTHOR OF "DAKOTA DAN," "BOWIE-KNIFE BEN," "RED ROB," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DANGER AHEAD.

THE sun had just crossed the meridian when five persons appeared on the south-eastern shore of Silver Bay, and, pausing, swept the glassy sheet before them with an admiring, enthusiastic gaze.

They were our young friends—the heroes of the Wolf-Herder's ranch—the Boy Hunters.

"For the first time I behold the wonderful Tahoe!" exclaimed Frank, with a flourish of his hand.

"Mother av Moses, and isn't she a rare beauty, though?" added Billy Brown, his eyes distending with delight.

"Magnificent—grand!" put in Perry, his whole face beaming with a smile of admiration.

"Oh, me love! and it's a perfect swate darlint of a little duck-pond," again gushed the irrepressible William Brady.

"Over yonder you can see that floating island of which I have been tellin' you," said Wild Dick.

"I see an island, but one would naturally suppose it was stationary—a natural island."

"There's no wind to move it now, but by to-morrow morning, or even by night, it may be rods from where it now is."

"There's something queer as well as romantic about the island."

"I've always said so, Frank," responded Wild Dick, "but how would you like a row out on the bottom of Tahoe?"

"I would like it very much indeed, if we only had a canoe."

"There's an old leaky concern around here a little ways. After awhile we'll take a row in that, for I want to show you something else—the men that inhabit this lake like fish—actually live in the water and walk about upon the bottom of the lake as you and I walk upon the earth."

"Preposterous, Dick," said Frank.

"Well, we'll see," was the Boy Hunter's good-natured response.

They moved around the lake-shore until they came to where the canoe, spoken of by Dick, was concealed under some trailing willow.

It was a crazy old affair, dangerous for more than two to venture out in; but Wild Dick was so anxious to convince Frank of the truth of what he had been telling him, that these two youths at once embarked in the craft, leaving the other three to await their return.

As they glided out upon the deep, young Casleton became enraptured with the almost ethereal beauty of the element beneath them. He leaned over the side of the boat and gazed steadily down into its transparent depths.

"Over yonder, Dick," he cried, enthusiastically, "I have often heard of the clearness of Tahoe's waters, but could not fully credit the report. Now I find it even more grand than I had anticipated. This lake is a wonderful freak of nature, Dick."

"Yes, it is, Frank; but now look out. It was right about here that I seen them critters two weeks ago."

Frank kept a close watch down in the deep. Dick paddled hither and thither, all the while working well in toward the floating island which, for the time being, had been forgotten by Frank.

Suddenly the latter started up with an exclamation of surprise.

"There, by heaven!" he cried.

"See 'em?" was the cool interrogation of Dick.

"I see something as true as I can see at all; and, by heavens! it's a man—a living being!—walking upon the bottom of the lake. He is dressed in a queer sort of armor."

Wild Dick ceased paddling, and leaning over the side of the boat gazed down into the deep, and there upon the lake saw what Frank did.

The water at this point was not over twenty feet deep, and there could be no mistake as to what they saw. Upon the rocky bed of the bay stood a living man, or a creature so nearly resembling a man clad in armor, that the youths felt satisfied that it was a human being possessed of some supernatural power.

The strange creature, whatever it was, seemed fully cognizant of the attention it attracted. It stopped, and raising its face upward stared at them with its great, glassy eyes until a feeling of horrible fascination appeared to fix the gaze and hold the tongues of the two boys.

It was a mystery far beyond the comprehension of the young hunters; and while they sat contemplating the same, a faint call reached their ears.

Both started up and involuntarily glanced toward the island. A cry of surprise burst from each one's lips. On the southern extremity they saw a young girl standing, waving a white handkerchief above her head.

"See 'em?" was the cool interrogation of Dick.

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her, and could easily see that she was looking toward them and gesticulating in a manner that denoted excitement.

"What does it mean?" Each of the youths asked himself the question while he sat with his eyes fixed upon the female form on the island.

A fascination about the girl held the youths enchanted. She was dressed in a robe of sky-blue material which contrasted well with her white throat and rosy cheeks. Her long hair hung loose at her back and floated out on the breeze like silken skeins of gossamer.

In one hand she held the handkerchief that she had been waving, and in the other a small field-glass.

"Look! you are in danger!" she suddenly cried, in a clear, distinct voice, at the same time pointing away toward the peninsula that nearly separated the bay from the lake.

The boys looked in the direction indicated, and saw a canoe, with three Indians in it, coming toward the strait toward them. It was not over two hundred yards away, and two of the savages were already getting their rifles into the positions for immediate use.

Dick seized the paddle with a view of putting distance between them and the foe, for the youths had left their rifles in care of their friends, and they were in a manner defenseless; but the first stroke was so vigorous that the old paddle snapped in two, and the boys were left helpless and at the mercy of the approaching enemies; while the wind was driving them nearer and nearer the menacing danger.

"By Jerusalem, Frank! we're in a pickle," cried Dick. "We've got to jump out of this and swim for it, or die."

"Shall we make for the island?"

"Not by any means, Frank. That girl may be a siren luring us on still deeper into danger under pretense of—"

"I cannot think so, Dick," interrupted Frank. "She looks too much like an angel for that; but, suppose we try to escape ashore, will the foe not head us off?"

"The long-ranged rifles of our friends will cover our retreat."

"Then, go ahead, Dick, and I will follow you, though I perish in the attempt."

Dick sprang overboard and struck boldly out for the shore, swimming on his back. Frank arose to his feet and was about to follow, when a savage rifle rung out sharply over the water. A cry burst from the youth's lips; he threw up his hands, and, staggering, fell backward into the lake—stricken down by a savage bullet!

CHAPTER XIX.

ZOE TO THE RESCUE.

WILD DICK knew nothing of his friend's mishap. The surge of the water around him as his little form cut its way through the element, drowned the report of the savage's rifle, and, supposing that Frank was close behind him, he pushed rapidly on toward the shore.

Frank's friends saw him fall from the canoe, but they were not the only ones. The maid upon the island also saw him stricken down. She had seen the paddle snap in two in Dick's hands, and at once read the peril of their situation. To relieve them was her first thought.

To spring into a canoe moored in a little cove in the side of the island, take up the paddle and send the light craft skimming out into the bay, occupied the brief space of a few moments.

A few vigorous strokes of the paddle carried her alongside of the wounded, struggling youth. With an almost superhuman effort, in which she was but slightly aided by the youth himself, she succeeded in dragging him into the canoe, and at once read the peril of their situation. To relieve them was her first thought.

Then the brave little heroine paddled back to the island, on whose shore she was met by three armed men, whose rifles had covered her retreat.

Two of the men were middle-aged, while the third was past fifty.

A look of regret clouded the old man's face, as he gazed upon the unconscious youth in the canoe.

"Is he dead, Zoe?" he asked.

"No, father; I think he is only wounded," replied the maiden, in a tremulous voice, her eyes filling with tears.

By a young man lifted the form of the boy from the canoe, and carried him into a tent upon the island. Placing him upon a cot there, they turned and went out.

"I'm afraid it's all up with him, Hubert," one of them said to the old man, whom they met at the door.

Hubert Leland went into the tent, and kneeling by the youth, examined his pulse. Then he searched for his wound.

"Is he dead, father?" eagerly inquired Zoe, who stood in the doorway, breathlessly awaiting her father's decision.

"Dead—no, child; far from it. His wound is but a mere scratch upon the temple. But he is the worse of his struggle in the water. Another minute and he would have been dead by drowning. Daughter, bring me some brandy and a suit of the boys' clothes, and I will soon have him afoot."

With a joyous light beaming upon her face, the bright-eyed Zoe hastened to obey the demand. The stimulant was soon brought and administered. The youth was then turned upon his face, and by continual pressure upon the back and sides, the water was ejected from his lungs. Signs of returning consciousness were soon manifest.

When he had done all he could, Hubert Leland arranged him in a comfortable position and went out to await that result which only time could effect.

Hubert Leland was a man of a naturally grave, yet pleasant demeanor. Tall and commanding in form, with a calmness in his tone, a strange intelligence in his steel-gray eyes, it was evident that in him great force of character and precision of mind were strongly predominant.

His companions, who answered to the names of Silas Jamison and Theodore Roberts, became familiar by their looks that they were honest, kind-hearted men.

"How is he, father?" inquired Zoe, when he came out of the tent.

"He is being punished for being inquisitive," the old man replied, solemnly.

"He will live, then?" asked Roberts.

"Yes, but he will doubtless suffer. Were he not a boy, I would feel sore toward him. But his youth will excuse him. He is a fine, manly-looking fellow, brave and fearless to a fault, I dare say. Perhaps we may be able to enlist him in our service, and thereby involve him in our secrets. But our surrounding situation—how is that?"

"The savages have disappeared, and not a sign of life is visible on the bay or along the shore, father," replied Zoe. "But you can hear firing going on out among the hills to the southward of the bay."

"The red skins have gone ashore and got into a fight with this boy's friends," said Jamison, "and we may be involved in trouble now."

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"The red heathens know better than to venture within gunshot of us," declared Leland; "therefore we might resume our work, boys. And Zoe, you will not fail to keep your watch on all sides. If the youth should recover, he will doubtless be very curious about his situation. You know your duty, daughter."

"Certainly, father," responded the maiden. Having thus cautioned his daughter, Hubert Leland and his male friends advanced to the interior of the island and entered a large quadrangular tent whose covering was of heavy oil cloth.

Zoe scanned the surrounding shores, and having made certain that no enemy was in sight, she turned and on tiptoe stole into the tent where Frank Casleton lay. This tent was large and strongly constructed. Of the half-dozen that stood around it upon the island, half hidden beneath vines and bushes, it seemed to be the main dwelling, or sitting-room, of the little party. It was furnished and fitted up with that peculiar air of neatness and comfort which only the deft fingers of woman can impart to the arrangements of a household.

In one corner, on a kind of a shelf, were a number of books. A guitar, several pictures and a bouquet of beautiful flowers contributed their sweetness and magical influence to the apartment. In addition to these, a rosewood clock ticked the hours away.

Zoe sat down by the side of the seemingly unconscious youth, and gazed upon his handsome face with a mingled expression of pity and admiration beaming in her soft eyes. She knew no impropriety in going alone into the tent. She was young and unsophisticated in the ways of the world. Her motives, like her heart, were the purest of the pure. She felt an interest in the young stranger which was but the inspiration of a kind and generous soul—the offspring of a heart untrammelled by care or the weight of human sin.

Zoe Leland was a beautiful creature, just budding into womanhood. She was lithe in form, yet molded with all the grace of health and beauty nourished by unalloyed happiness. Her features were of the rarest type of female loveliness, wearing an air of queenly grace and modesty, and at the same time partaking much of her father's force of character and decision of mind.

As before stated, she was dressed in a sky-blue robe, girded at the waist with a delicate white ribbon. Her golden hair was gathered back from her brow and temples, and permitted to flow like a silken mass down her back. She wore but a single jewel—a diamond ring of great value and exceeding brilliancy.

Thus appeared Zoe Leland, the Lady of the Isle, as Idaho Tom addressed her—a rare flower, there blooming alone, and "wasting its sweetness on the desert air," as it were. And why?—who can tell!

For a moment or two Zoe lingered by the bedside of the young hunter; then she rose, and going out, seated herself under the shade of a manzanita, where she could command a view of the whole bay, and

"It is very beautiful," she finally remarked, glancing out over the lake and along the shores.

A minute of silence followed, then Frank said:

"I do wonder if my friend escaped ashore?" "I think he did. I heard a sharp firing going on over yonder among the hills soon after I landed with you here, and I presume your friends, of whom I know there are four or five, were engaged with the enemy."

"If I could only get ashore, I would hunt them up, and intrude upon your hospitality," the youth said, thoughtfully.

"I am sure, Frank Cusleton, your presence here is not obtrusive. Rest assured of being among friends."

Frank's heart gave a great bound and a feeling, far stronger than admiration, arose in his heart for the beautiful maiden. And Zoe must have noticed it in his clear, brown eyes, for her long silken lashes drooped shyly as she toyed thoughtlessly with a leaf plucked from the bush whose graceful, loughs protected her from the sun's hot tide.

Frank had construed her words of kind assurance into a modest invitation to remain upon the island. He flattered himself that she felt pleased with his company.

The two lingered an hour or more under the cool shade of the manzanita, then Zoe arose and tripped lightly as a happy school-girl away to her tent.

Frank arose and sauntered leisurely about the island, noting the peculiar construction of the floating mass.

The island must have been about eighty feet long by half that number in breadth. A narrow channel or cove cut the whole half across its width. It was about ten feet wide, and had evidently been intended as a kind of a harbor for the protection of canoes, as several light craft were resting there.

The foundation of the island was of logs fastened securely together. These were covered with a layer of the rich, alluvial deposits of soil taken from the adjacent valley; and in this was growing a perfect forest of shrubbery transplanted there by the hand of man. Aquatic plants and vines had been planted around the edge of the island, and now trailed their green festoonery in the crystal waves. Here and there was a framework of poles, or a tent embowered with a fleece of wild ivy or cucumber. Flowers of the brightest hue and sweetest fragrance flourished under the culture of the lovely Zoe's hand. Altogether it was an island that rivaled in beauty the famed flower-covered *chinampas*, which adorned the Mexican lakes in the days of the Aztec empire, or the floating gardens of the lake of Cashmere.

Frank did not allow his curiosity to lead into impertinent inquiry in his stroll about the little spot. He regarded each object with but a passing indifference. There was one large, square tent, however, that he came to regard with some inward curiosity. It was carefully closed all around, but, for the fact that he caught the sound of plashing water within it, and saw the dim outlines of a man through the walls, he would have thought nothing strange about it.

In walking around, Frank passed another tent in which were a number of rifles and other weapons of defense. In still another was a small "emigrant stove" and cooking utensils. There was another tent upon a slight elevation surrounded with brushwood and vines, which guarded the approach to the door. This was evidently a secret apartment seldom used.

The inhabitants of the island appeared to be well provided against the contingency of a siege, and yet betrayed an indifference that was not consistent with their surrounding dangers.

An hour before sunset the three men came out of the large, square tent, their faces wearing a look of care and anxiety. They were surprised to see Frank out, yet listened with apparent joy to the youth's own story of his speedy recovery, and at once entered into a guarded conversation with him.

Their intercourse was finally interrupted by Zoe, who announced supper ready.

Frank was invited to the board of the islanders, and accepted the invitation.

Hubert Leland asked the blessing when they had all gathered around the board. The deep, solemn earnestness in his full, strong voice, appealed directly to Frank's young heart, and plunged him still deeper in mental speculation as to the avocation of these people.

After supper, the evening, until bed-time, was spent in conversation; but the men were so guarded in their remarks that Frank could not gain the slightest clue to the mystery in which their secluded life involved them.

At length he was assigned a couch in an unoccupied tent, adjacent to the large one occupied by the three men during the day. He had lain long enough to wear out any ordinary wakefulness, but the fate of his companions, and the bright eyes of the lovely Zoe, kept his mind busy, and banished sleep.

He was suddenly started by a sharp, metallic clicking in the large tent near. He arose to a sitting posture and listened. The clicking was continued.

It was that of a telegraphic battery! Frank knew this, for, as before stated, he was an operator himself by occupation.

The youth strained every nerve in his effort to read the sound. But the sound suddenly ceased; still Frank waited in hopes it would be resumed. And it was. Frank caught every click of the instrument, and this is what he read:

"Friends, look out—the country is full of Mo-lock's devils, red and white. Also a band of Boy Hunters is trying to probe the mystery of the floating island, and are now skulking around the lake. Scout."

(To be continued—commenced in No. 284.)

Victoria:

OR,
THE HEIRESS OF CASTLE CLIFFE.

BY MRS. MAY AGNES FLEMING,
AUTHOR OF "THE DARK SECRET," "AWFUL MYSTERY," "THE RIVAL BROTHERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SENTENCE.

At day-dawn the next morning Cliftonlea was all bustle and stir; and at ten o'clock the court-house was a perfect jam. There were troops of people down from London, who all knew the Shirleys; swarms of newspaper-reporters, note-book and pencil in hand, not to speak of half the county besides. The gallery was filled with ladies, and among them glided in one in a long, shrouding mantle, and wearing a thick veil; but people knew the white face of Margaret Shirley, despite any disguise.

The colonel was there, and so was Sir Roland, *malgre* his gout; and so was Joe, the game-keeper's son, looking scared beyond everything, and full of the vague notion that he stood in as much danger of hanging, himself,

as the prisoner. The prisoner did not look at all scared; he sat in the dock as he had sat in his cell the day before, pale, quiet, and perfectly calm, scanning the crowd with his dauntless black eyes, and meeting the gaze of all known and unknown with the stoicism of an Indian at the stake. Some of the reporters began sketching his face in their note-books. Tom saw it, and smiled; and the crowd set him down as a cool hand, and a guilty one. Very few present had any doubt of his guilt; the facts that had come out of the inquest were strong against him; and there was nobody else, apparently, in the world who had the least interest in the death of the murdered man. All knew by that time how everything stood—how infuriated he had been with the young lady, and how madly jealous he was of the accepted lover. And everybody knew, too, what jealousy will make, and has made, the best of men, down from King David down; and Tom's hasty and violent temper was notorious. Worst of all, he refused to give any account of himself whatever; for the simple fact that he had no account to give that would not injure Vivia's name; and the tortures of a martyr would not have drawn that from him in a crowded court-room. After the scene in the starlight under the chestnuts, he had fled from the place, and haunted Cliftonlea like a lost spirit. On the bridal-night an insane impulse drew him back again with a relentless hand, and he had wandered up and down among the trees almost beside himself, but wholly unable to go away.

Tom could not very well have told his pitiable tale of love-sickness and insanity to a grim judge and jury; so he just held his tongue, resolved to let things take their course, almost indifferent to the issue.

Things did take their course. They always do, where these two inexorable fate, Time and Law, are in question. The case was opened in a brilliant speech by the counsel for the crown, that told hard on the prisoner, and then the witnesses were called. Joe came in requisition, and so did Mr. Sweet's Elizabeth, and it would be hard to say which of the two was the most terrified, or which cried the most before they were sent down. Mr. Sweet had to give evidence, so had Colonel Shirley, so had Sir Roland, so had the doctor, so had the game-keeper, so had a number of other people, who one would think had nothing to do with it. And at three o'clock the court adjourned, leaving things pretty much as they were before; the prisoner was remanded back to his cell; the mob went home to their dinners, and to assert, confidently, that before long there would be an execution in Cliftonlea.

The trial lasted three days; and with each passing one the interest grew deeper, and the case more and more hopeless. Every day the crowd in and around the court-house grew more dense; and always the first on the ground was the shrinking figure of the veiled lady. But on the third, just as the case was drawing to a final close, something happened that settled the last doubt in the minds of the jury, if such a thing as a doubt had ever rested there. A woman had made her way through the crowd by dint of sharp elbows and sharper tongue, and had taken her place on the witness-stand, in a very determined and excited state of mind. The young woman was Jeannette, who had followed her young lady to France, and had evidently just come back from that delightful land; and on informing them she had taken a long journey to give important evidence, she was sworn, and asked what she had to say.

Jeannette had a good deal to say, chiefly in parenthesis, with a strong French accent, a great many *Mon Dieus*, and no punctuation marks to speak of. It appeared, however, when the evidence was shorn of all French embellishment, that on the night the deceased had returned from London a couple of days before the one fixed for the wedding, Miss Vivia had been wandering alone in the park, where she was suddenly joined by the prisoner. She, Jeannette, had followed her young lady out to warn her against night-dews, when, hearing a loud and angry voice, she halted, discreetly, at a distance, with the true instinct of her class, to listen. There she had overheard the prisoner making very loud and honest protestations of love to Miss Shirley; and when rejected, and assured by her she would marry none but Mr. Cliffe, he had flown out in such a way, that she, Jeannette, was scared pretty nearly into fits, and she was perfectly sure she had heard him threaten to murder the bridegroom-elect. Mademoiselle Jeannette further informed her audience that, believing the prisoner guilty, her conscience would not let her keep the matter secret, and it had sent her across the Channel, in spite of sea-sickness, unknown to her young lady, to unburden her mind. It was hard evidence against the prisoner; and though mademoiselle underwent a galling cross-examination, her testimony could not be shaken, though it left her, as it well might, in a very wild and hysterical state of mind at its close. Colonel Shirley, standing near Tom, stooped down in dismay, and whispered:

"Have you anything to say to all this?"

"Nothing; it is perfectly true."

"Then your case is hopeless."

"It has been hopeless all along," said Tom, quietly, as Mademoiselle Jeannette descended, quite out of herself with the cross-examination she had undergone.

There was nothing more to be done. The evidence was summed up in one mighty mass against the prisoner, and the jury retired to find a verdict. It was not hard to find. In five minutes they were back, and the swaying and murmuring of the crowd subsided into an awful hush of expectation as the foreman arose.

Gentlemen of the jury, is the prisoner at the bar guilty or not guilty of the felony with which he is charged?"

And solemnly the answer came, what everybody knew it would be:

"Guilty, my lord."

The judge arose with his black cap on his head. His address to the prisoner was eloquent and touching, and the crowd seemed to hush their very heart-beating to listen. There were tears in his eyes before he had done, and his voice was tremulous as he wound up with the usual ghastly formula.

"Your sentence is, that you be taken hence to the place from whence you came, from thence to the place of execution, to be hung by the neck till dead, and may God have mercy on your soul."

He sat down, but the same dead silence reigned still. It was broken at last by a sound common enough at such times—a veiled lady in the gallery had fallen forward in a dead swoon.

CHAPTER XXXI.
THE TURN OF THE WHEEL.

It was a wild night on the Sussex coast. A north wind roared over the Channel—a terrible north wind, that shrieked and raved, and lashed the waves into white fury; that tore up trees by the roots, blew off tall steeples, and

filled the air with a sharp shower of tiles and chimney-pots, and demolishing frail buildings altogether. A terrible night down there on the coast—a terrible night for the ships at sea—a night that had everything its own way, and defied the hardest of wayfarers to venture out. Great sheets of lurid lightning flashed incessantly; great shocks of thunder pealed overhead, shaking sky, and earth, and sea, to their very foundations. A terrible night in Cliftonlea—the oldest inhabitant had never remembered anything like it. Very few thought of going to bed—a gentleman had come preaching there shortly before, with the important information that the end of the world was at hand; and all Cliftonlea, particularly the fairer portion, believing that it had come on this particular night, resolved to appear with their clothes on. A terrible night in Lower Cliffe, where nobody thought of going to bed at all; for the dreadful roaring of the storm and the cannonading of the rising sea on the shores seemed to threaten entire destruction to the little village before morning. A terrible night within the park, where tall trees of a century's growth were torn up and flung aside like straws; where the rooks were cawing and screeching in their nests; where the peacocks were hidden away in their houses, the swans in their sheds, and the roses in the parterres were stripped and beaten to the dust. A terrible night, even within the strong walls of the old castle, where the great kitchen, and the servants' hall, and butler's pantry, and the house-keeper's room were filled with terrified footmen and housemaids; where Lady Agnes shivered as she listened to it in the ghastly solitude of her own room; where Margaret woke up, cowering and shuddering from the stupor in which she lay, and colored how he bore it in his prisoning, and how he sat reading by the light of a flaring tallow candle, in a little gold and purple book, lifted his pale and quiet face, and listened to it much more calmly than any of them. Much more calmly than Colonel Shirley, pacing up and down in his own room, as the midnight hour was striking, like an uneasy ghost. It was a splendid room—splendid in green velvet and malachite, with walnut paneling and wainscoting, the furniture of massive mahogany, upholstered in green billiard-cloth, and the bed-hangings of green velvet and white satin. The same sober tints of green and brown were repeated in the mahogany carpet, a bull clock ticked on the carved walnut mantel, and over it a bright portrait of Vivia looked down and smiled. There was a small armory on one side, full of Damascus swords, daggers and poniards, pistols and muskets, eel-spears, bows and arrows and riding-whips, all flashing in the light of a bright wood fire burning on the marble hearth; for, though the month was August, these grand, vast old rooms were always chilly, and on this tempestuous night particularly so. A round table, on which burned two wax candles, was drawn up before the fire, and covered over with ledgers, check-books and packages of fresher-looking documents tied up with red tape. A green cushioned arm-chair stood on either side of the table, and though they were empty now, they had been a couple of hours previously.

In the first train to-morrow morning Colonel Shirley was leaving Cliftonlea, perhaps forever, and going where glory led him, and so on; and he and Mr. Sweet had had a very busy afternoon and evening in settling the complicated accounts of the estate. They had finished about ten; and Mr. Sweet had gone home, despite the rising storm which was now at its height; and ever since the colonel had been walking up and down, and down, anxiously impatient for the morning that was to see him off. It was the evening that had concluded Tom Shirley's trial; and he, too, like Margaret, was thinking of him in his lonely cell; and though the lightning came blazing through the shuttered and curtained window, and the roar of the storm, the sea and the wind, boomed an awful harmony around them, he scarcely heeded either; and as the bull clock vibrated on the last silver stroke of twelve there was a tap at the door, and then the handle was turned, and the respectful face of Mr. Hurst looked in.

"There's a man down below, sir, that has just arrived, and he insists on seeing you. It is a matter of life or death, he says."

The colonel stopped, astonished, in his walk. "Some one to see me on such a night! Who is he?"

"I don't know, sir. He looks like a sailor, in a pea-jacket and a sou'-wester hat; but the collar of the jacket is turned up, and the hat is pulled down, and there's no seeing anything of him but his nose."

"And he said it was a matter of life or death. It ought to be, certainly, to bring him out in a night like this."

"Yes, sir. He said he would see you, if he had to search the house over for you. He's a precious rough-looking customer, sir!"

"Show him up!" was the curt reply. And Mr. Hurst bowed and withdrew.

He was resting against the carved mantel, one elbow resting upon it, and his eyes fixed thoughtfully on the fire, when his visitor entered—a somewhat stout and not very tall man, in a large, rough jacket, a shining hat, and splashed top-boots. There was more of the man and splashed than boots, for he was dripping all over like a water-dog; and, as Mr. Hurst had intimated, his coat-collar was turned up, and his hat pulled down so that, besides the nose, nothing was visible but a pair of fierce eyes. This nocturnal intruder took the precaution to turn the key in the lock as soon as the valet disappeared, and then came slowly forward and stood before the colonel.

"Well, my friend," said that gentleman, quietly, "I did!"

"On a matter of importance, my servant said."

"If it wasn't important," said the man, gruffly, "it ain't very likely I'd come here to tell it to you on a night that ain't fit for a mad dog to be out. It's something you'd give half your estates to learn, Colonel Shirley, or I'm mistaken!"

"Out with it, then; and, in the mean time, suppose you sit down."

His visitor drew up one of the green arm-chairs closer to the hearth, and subsiding into it, without, however, removing his hat, spread out his splashed top-boots to the genial influence of the hot wood-fire. There was something familiar about the man, in his burly figure, rough voice and fierce eyes; but the colonel could not remember where he had seen and heard those items before; and a long silence followed, during which the man in the top-boots looked at the fire, the colonel looked at him, the lightning flashed, the wind shrieked, and the portrait of Vivia smiled down on all. At last:

"If you merely wish to warm yourself, my friend," said the colonel, with composure, "I presume there is a fire in the servants' hall. Allow me to inform you that it is past twelve, and I have a long journey to commence to-morrow morning!"

"You'll commence no journey to-morrow morning," the man in the pea-jacket coolly said.

"Indeed! Suppose, for politeness sake, you remove that hat, and let me see the gentleman who makes so extraordinary an assertion?"

"Just you hold on a minute, and you'll see me soon enough! As I said, it's a matter of life or death that brings me here; and you'll hear it all in time, and you won't take any journey to-morrow! I've been fool enough in my time, Lord knows! but I ain't such a fool as to come out on such a night, and get half-drowned for nothing!"

"Very good! I am waiting for you to go on!"

"There was a murder committed here a couple of months ago," said the mysterious person in the pea-jacket, "wasn't there?"

"Yes!" said the colonel, with a slight recoil, as he thought that perhaps the real murderer sat before him.

"The young gentleman as was murdered was Mr. Leicester Cliffe; and another young gentleman, Mr. Tom Shirley, has been tried and condemned for the murder!"

"Yes!"

"Well," said the man in the pea-jacket, still quite coolly, "he is innocent!"

"I know it!"

"Do you? Perhaps you know, too, who's the guilty party?"

"No. Do you?"

"Yes, I do!" said the man; "and that's what brings me here to-night!"

Again there was a pause. The colonel's lips had turned white, but nothing could shake his stoical composure. The man in the sailor's dress had his hands on his knees, and was leaning forward, looking up at him.

"And who—but first, my mysterious friend, before any more questions are asked or answered, I must insist on your removing that hat, and showing me who you are."

"All right! It's only a hanging matter, anyway! Look here!"

His visitor rose up, turned down the collar of the pea-jacket, lifted off the dripping sou'-wester, and glared up at him in the firelight with a pair of exceedingly green and wolfish eyes.

"Ah!" said the colonel, slowly, "I thought it was you; and you have come back, then?"

"I have come back!" said his visitor, with a savage gleam in his wolfish eyes. "I have come back to be hung, very likely; but by—I'll hang over and over again a thousand times, for the pleasure of seeing him hang beside me once! Hunted down! Hunted down! He's been at it for the last six years, until he's got me to the end of the rope at last! My dog's life hasn't been such a comfort to me, Lord knows! that I should care to lose it; but when I do hang, he'll hang beside me, by—!"

"Have the goodness to calm yourself, Mr. Black, and become intelligible! Whom are you talking about?"

"My name ain't Black, and you know it! My name is Wildman—Jack Wildman, as was transported for life; and I don't care if the devil heard it! Whom am I talking about? I'm talking about a man as I hate, as I've hated for years; and if I had him here, I would tear the eyes out of his head, and the black heart out of his body, and dash his brains out against this here wall! I would, by—"

The man's oaths were appalling. The colonel shuddered slightly with disgust and repulsion as he heard him, and his face was like that of a human demon.

"Will you come to the point, Mr. Black, or Mr. Wildman, whichever you choose! You say you know the real murderer of Leicester Cliffe—who is he?"

"Him as I am talking of—a yellow devil with a black heart, and his name is Sweet!"

Colonel Shirley started up, and grasped the mantel against which he leaned.

"Man," he cried, "what have you said?"

"I have said the truth, and I can prove it! That yellow dog, that I would strangle if I had him near me, that Lawyer Sweet—he killed the young gentleman! I saw him with my own eyes!"

The colonel stood looking a hundred questions he could not speak—struck for the moment perfectly speechless.

"Yes; you may wonder," said Mr. Black, subsiding into his chair again, and letting himself cool down like a bottle of ginger beer after the first explosion; "but it's true as gospel! I saw him do the deed myself, the night of the wedding; and Mr. Tom Shirley—he is innocent!"

"Tell me all," said the colonel, finding voice; "and, for Heaven's sake, do it instantly!"

"I am a-going to. I have taken all this journey in the wind and rain to-night to do it; and I'll hunt him down as he has hunted me, if they were to hang, and draw, and quarter me the next minute! You know that evening I went away; and I don't think anybody here ever heard of me since."

"Go on!"

"I had been out that day, and it was night on to sundown when I came home. I found my old mother on the ground, just recovering from a fit, and just able to tell me that that yellow villain had been with her, and was going to tell all—the secret he had kept so long. That was the first I ever knew of Barbara's being your daughter instead of mine; though I did know he had some power over the old woman I could not get at the bottom of. Whatever he may say, he knewed it all along; and it was that made him marry her. From the time he met you in the graveyard, the night of my wife and that baby. But when she told me it all, and how he threatened to peach about my being a returned transport, I believe the very old Satan got into me, and I started up, and went out to find him and kill him. They say a worm will turn if trodden on; he had trodden on me long enough, Lord knows! and it was my turn now. If I had met him in the middle of the town, with all the people in it looking on, I would have torn his throat out as I would a mad dog's. I would have done it if they was to burn me alive for it the next minute! As I got up near his house, I saw him come out, and I hid behind a tree to watch him. Before he got far, he stopped, and began watching somebody along High Street without seeing either of us, and went in. Then Sweet dodged round the back way, and went into the house after him, and I was left alone waiting behind the tree, and waiting for my game to come out. I don't know exactly what passed, but I have a notion that Mr. Leicester wanted Barbara to run away with him, and that the yellow viper was listening, and heard it all. It was night on dark when Mr. Leicester came out, and set off like a steam-engine toward Lower Cliffe, to take a short cut, I expect, to the castle; and Sweet came sneaking after him, like the snake in the grass he is. There we was, a-dodging after each other, the three of us, and Sweet and me trying to keep out of sight as well as we could, and getting into

alley-ways and behind trees whenever we saw anybody coming. There wasn't many out to see us for that matter; for all the town, and the village, too, was up in the park; and Mr. Leicester went up through the park gates, and we two sneaked after him without meeting a soul. Instead of going straight up to the castle, as he'd ought to do, Mr. Leicester turned off to that lonesome spot they call the Nun's Grave; and still we two was dodging in through the trees after him. When he got there he stopped, and stood, with his arms crossed, looking down at it; and there was the yellow devil behind him, and I could see his face in the moonlight, and he looked more like a devil than ever. There was a club lying on the grass, just as if Old Nick had left it there for his favorite son—a big knotted stick, that would have felled an ox; and Sweet he raised it, his grinning mouth grinning more than you ever saw it, and, with one blow, knocked the young gentleman stiff on the ground!"

Mr. Black paused in his long narration to turn the other side of his steaming legs to the influence of the blaze, and to look up searchingly at the colonel. But as that gentleman stood as rigid as the marble guest in Don Giovanni, and made no comment, he went on:

"The minute he did the deed, as if he knew his work was finished, he dropped the club, made a rush through the trees, and I lost him. So there I was foiled again, with the young gentleman lying as stiff as if he had been a month dead at my feet. I shouldn't at all have minded being hung for murdering Sweet; I wouldn't have cared a curse for it; but I didn't want to hang for a murder I hadn't done; so I took leg bail, and got away from the place as he had done. I knew Cliftonlea would be too hot to hold me now. I didn't know but what that lying villain would make me out to be the murderer; so my notion was to be off in the evening train for London, and take my time for revenge. Just as I got through the park gates, who should I see but Barbara on the beach, pushing off in a boat from the shore. I sung out to her, but it was no use; she wouldn't stop; so I just swam up to her, got on board, and asked her where she was going. I don't know what she said. I think she was out of her mind; but I found out she was running away from him—from Cliftonlea; and then it struck me, as I was in the boat, the best thing I could do was to row to Lisleham, take the cars for London there, and so throw folks off the scent. And that is the way it happened you couldn't hear anything from either of us."

"Well," said the colonel, "you went to London?"

"No we didn't. The first person we met on the wharf at Lisleham was an old chum of mine. He had been with me from New South Wales, but he was well off now, and the captain of a schooner. I had nothing to do but to tell him the police were on my track, and I was sure of safe quarters on board his craft until the heat of the hunt was over. We sailed that very day for Dover; and before we were two hours out, Barbara was down raving mad with brain fever. There was no doctor on board, and she had to get out of it the best way she could; but we made the voyage, stayed awhile in France, and was back in Lisleham long before she stopped raving or knew anybody. I got some English papers in Dover, and there I saw all about the murder; I saw how Mr. Tom was took up for it; and I knew I had held my tongue about long enough. I would have come posting back by express; but I couldn't leave Barbara alone in the schooner, and I knew I was time enough. We got in two hours ago. The schooner is at anchor out there now; and, in spite of the storm, I came on shore. And now, sir, that's the whole story. Sweet he's the murderer; and I'll see him hung for it, if I hang myself beside him."

There was a long pause. The storm seemed to increase in fury, and the uproar without had become terrific. The colonel lifted his head and listened to it.

"Barbara, you say, is in the schooner?"

"She is—but more like a ghost or a skeleton than anything living!"

"You're sure the schooner is safely anchored, and not exposed to the fury of this storm?"

Mr. Black opened his mouth to reply in the affirmative, when he was ominously stopped by the sharp report of a minute-gun echoing through the roar of the hurricane, and rapidly followed by another and another.

"I thought it would come to that," said the colonel. "The coast in the morning will be strewn with wrecks! I am going down to the shore."

"All right," said Mr. Black; "we can't be of any use, you know; but I have got cramped with sitting here, and want to stretch my legs a bit. Lord, how it's storming!"

The colonel rapidly donned cap and overcoat, and followed by Mr. Black, left his bright fire and pleasant room, and hastened out into the night and storm. The sharp report of the minute-guns still rung through the uproar; but though they were met in the door by a rush of wind and rain that for an instant beat them back—though the lightning still flashed, and the thunder rolled, the storm had passed its meridian, and was subsiding. Dawn was lifting a leaden eye, too, above the mountains of black cloud, and lighting up with a pale and ghastly glimmer the black and foam-crested sea and the storm-beaten shore. Long before they reached the shore in the lashing tempest, the mournful minute-guns had ceased their cry for help, and the vessel, whatever it was, must inevitably have sunk with all its crew. Despite the wind, and rain, and lightning, the shore was lined when they reached it by the fishermen, and thrown up high on the shingly beach were broken spars, fragments of wreck, and most ghastly sight of all, the stark bodies of drowned men. A crowd had collected in one spot around a man who, it had turned out, was the only survivor, and who was telling the story of the disaster, as the newcomers came up.

"We were scudding along like Old Nick in a gale of wind," the man was saying, "our spars snapped off like knitting-needles, when we run afoul of the other craft, smashed her like an egg-shell, and down she went, head foremost, like a stone."

A shrill screech from Mr. Black, and off he darted like one possessed. Something had just been washed ashore, something his quick eye had caught, and over which he was bending now with a face as ghastly as those of the drowned men. With an awful presentiment, the colonel followed him, and his presentiment was realized to its utmost extent of horror. In the ooze and mud of the beach, her long hair streaming around her, her soaking dress clinging to her slender form, lay the drowned heiress of Castle Cliffe, with her face in the loathsome slime.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 283.)

A NEW HAVEN boy would have been killed by the kick of a horse had it not been for stolen apples in his pocket.

determined not to be in her way. She was a treasure to his aunt; he was glad of it; he would offend her sight as little as possible.

Mr. Sherman, the trusted solicitor, came and went like one of the family. He often spent the evening with them, and sometimes talked confidentially with Olive, when the invalid was asleep in her chamber.

"You perhaps know," he said abruptly to the girl one day, "that it has been a cherished idea with Mrs. Stanley that you should marry her nephew."

Olive looked up from her work, startled. Her face was flooded with crimson; but it soon receded, leaving her paler than before.

"Pardon me, I am a plain, blunt lawyer. I should like to know your friend might have confided her plan to you."

"Indeed, sir, she has no such plan."

"I know that she has. But you will excuse me—I was opposed to the idea."

"Pray, sir, do not jest on such a subject."

"I am not jesting. No; Hamilton is not the partner for you. He needs a woman of resolve; born to subdue; a leading mind."

"He is engaged, I hear, to Miss Monelle."

"The heiress! She is not the sort of woman I should have thought would please him. She is frivolous and exacting. He would not be happy with her."

"I hope he may be happy!" murmured Olive, speaking under her breath.

"And he will not need Monelle's money, being his aunt's heir; her heir-at-law, if she dies without a will."

"You may rely upon it, Mr. Hamilton has not sought the young lady for her money."

"How do you know, my dear?"

"Because he is incapable of such a thing. He is too noble, too disinterested."

"You are a kind advocate. But it is my opinion that he has done that very thing. Young men of the present day know the value of riches."

"I cannot believe he has done it, sir."

"Well, it is none of my business. Will Mrs. Stanley be down this evening?"

"I think not."

"The doctor thinks her out of danger; but as her disease is of the heart, no one can tell when she may have another attack."

"Oh, sir, I hope not! She has been brighter and better for some days, and I trust she will have no return of the pain from which she has suffered."

"Does she know of the visit of the man who claims to be her brother?"

"She has known of it several days. I told her as soon as she could bear it. But she has not seen him."

"She had better not. It would do her harm. He is a scamp. His career in California was one of crime, and ended in a prison. He was leagued at one time with a gang of counterfeiters. For that he was sent to jail for a term of years."

"How terrible!"

"Having served his time out, he comes here to be a burden to his sister; and a disgrace, too; for he may be seen almost any day at some low tavern, disgustingly drunk, boasting to the people at the bar that he is the rich Mrs. Stanley's brother."

"She must not be told of this, sir."

"No need of it. The rascal makes no secret of the fact that he is waiting for her death, to secure the lion's share of her property."

Olive shivered. She could not bear allusion to an event she had so much dreaded.

"I want a good long talk with my friend on business. Do you think she can see me this evening?"

"I do not know, Mr. Sherman. I will see if she is still asleep."

As she went out, the lawyer muttered as he paced the room:

"A fine girl; and she must not be unprovided for. I gave Mrs. Stanley a hint to that effect, and she took it kindly. She must put it in black and white. Nothing like being prepared for any event, and adding a codicil to a will does not hasten anybody's death."

Olive returned to say that the invalid would prefer Mr. Sherman to call the next day. He took his leave, saying he would come at eleven o'clock. But when that time arrived on the following day, and he presented himself, true to the appointment, the lady was in no condition to receive him.

A severe attack of her malady had seized her. It was controlled with difficulty, and left her in an exhausted state. The physician enjoined the utmost quiet, and strictly forbade his patient seeing any one but her faithful companion, besides the nurse. He no longer held out the hope of recovery to even partial health.

All day sat Olive by the bedside, soothing the sufferer, holding her hand, or wiping the clammy dews from her forehead. Claude Hamilton came more than once to the door, to be denied an entrance. All that day, and part of the night—the hour of slumber Olive passed on the lounge in a room adjoining—and all the next day.

Toward evening Mrs. Stanley's pain had left her, and she smiled sweetly on her young friend, and took from her hand a little nourishment, looking in her face as the most affectionate mother might regard a beloved child.

"Tell Claude I will see him, when he comes again," she said, cheerfully.

The nurse went for him, and Olive rose to leave the room.

"Stay, my child!" called Mrs. Stanley. "You must not leave me!"

"Mr. Hamilton is coming."

"But you need not go away. I would rather have you here. Stay, child."

The girl obeyed, but retreated to the other side of the room when Claude entered.

He was warmly attached to his aunt, and had deeply mourned her illness. It was a deep relief to her nephew to see her so much improved. He sat beside her, congratulated her, and expressed his ardent hopes of her speedy recovery.

"That may not be, my dear boy," she said, softly. "I feel that my days are numbered."

She went on to talk of various little matters she wished attended to, chiefly concerning her objects of charity. Olive drew her chair so that the bed-curtain screened her from observation, and wept silently. She saw herself about to be cast back into the friendless desolation she had experienced, and reproached herself for allowing thoughts of self to mingle with grief for the friend she was about to lose.

In the silence Mrs. Stanley's words became distinctly audible. She was speaking to her nephew.

"I have known of your love"—she was saying—"of one worthy of all affection. It was the dream of my life to see you happy. I know you will cherish her, Claude; I do not ask any promise."

The young man bowed his face over his aunt's hand.

"And I know her deep affection for you, my boy; it has been a tried and faithful attachment."

"She is speaking of Alice Monelle," said

Olive to herself. Her heart was beating violently.

"I have wished only to see you united before I am taken from you. Cannot that be, Claude?"

"Do not speak of this, dearest aunt," Olive heard him say, in low tones of deep feeling. "You are afraid of exciting me," answered the invalid. "There is no danger; it can make no difference. I wish I could see you—happy—happy—"

A paroxysm of gasping seized her. Claude started up with a cry of alarm. Olive rushed to the bed, and held to the invalid's pale lips the cordial she always took when those attacks came on. Holding her head against her own shoulder, she whispered that the excitement had been too much for her, and Mr. Hamilton had better retire.

But the invalid held out her hand to detain him. "Stay, Claude," she murmured, and caught his hand. With the other she clasped Olive's.

Raising herself upright, she suddenly brought their hands together, placing the girl's in that of her nephew. "God bless you both!" she murmured, pressing them in both her own, and repeating the blessing, while a seraphic smile illumined her face.

Then she sunk slowly back. Olive caught and supported her. Her eyes were closed, her lips were parted; yet she breathed softly.

"Has she fainted?" asked the young man, bending over her.

"No; but she is exhausted," returned Olive. "Pray excuse me, Mr. Hamilton, if I ask you not to remain. She will go to sleep now."

He stepped back from the bed, his eyes fixed on the young girl, who did not once look up. She was arranging the pillows, and placing the invalid in a comfortable position. When she turned to take her own place by the bed, she saw the door close on the nephew, who had gone out quietly.

He muttered as he went to his room:

"It is strange that she has so set her heart on my marriage, and does not see that I am an object of aversion, not of regard! Poor soul! I could not deceive her!"

He felt deeply humiliated; yet with an undercurrent of resentment. How had he deserved scorn and contempt? His spirit rose in rebellion. The girl need not, he thought, take such pains to show him that she would accept no tender of his affection. He would not incur the danger of a repulse.

Olive sat and mused by the sleeping patient. She took her treacherous heart to task.

"Am I weak enough to feel wronged?" she said to herself. She felt humbled by the discovery of her heart's falsehood. It would not be swayed by her pride! With the shame she covered under was blended a feeling of anger toward young Hamilton. How mad was the dream she had once indulged! How delusive the happiness she could not help feeling, born of his mere presence, which, like the spring sun, had awakened her from torpor into life! She would crush down the feeling; she would dispel the dream; she would remember that he would be happy with another!

Later in the evening Mrs. Stanley was awake, and feeling better. She made Olive sit by her as usual, and tea was brought up to her. The invalid partook of the repast.

Then she began to talk, and Olive could not restrain her. She expressed her earnest desire for a union between the girl and her nephew. She had known of Claude's attachment before he went abroad; she knew that he was faithful to it still. She had read the hearts of both.

Here Olive interrupted her, laying her hand on her friend's, and speaking with difficulty amid choking emotion. Mrs. Stanley was utterly mistaken; she averred Mr. Hamilton did not care for her; he was averse to her rather than otherwise. She implored her dearest friend, as the only favor she had ever craved at her hands, not to speak again of this matter; never again to allude to it. She might be assured it could never be!

"I know my own boy too well to doubt him," answered his aunt. "And you—I may be mistaken in you. Speak frankly, Olive, do you dislike him?"

"Dearest Mrs. Stanley, it is not for me to have any thoughts of your nephew!" almost sobbed the girl, averting her face.

"Olive, you must tell me the truth. Do you not owe that to me?"

"I owe you everything, my beloved friend!"

"If you do not love my nephew, you have made me wrong him! I acted on that presumption. I have robbed him of his rights if you do not!"

The girl did not understand her words.

"Never mind; you will soon know what I mean. Answer me as you would at the day of judgment, girl: do you love Claude, or do you not?"

The poor girl fell on her knees beside the bed, and her clasped hands hid her face.

"Answer before it is too late for me to do him justice! The truth, girl!"

"Oh, madam, I dare not deceive you!"

"I have been deceived, if my judgment has been wrong. Tell me the truth. Remember, I am on my deathbed."

One wild, scared look the kneeling girl gave her benefactress. She saw a deathly pale face, with fixed, eager eyes devouring her face; with white, quivering lips, as in the act of adjuration.

"I do—I do—love him!" she faltered, while she buried her burning face in the bedclothes. The invalid passed her hand caressingly over the bowed head. In broken tones she faltered a blessing.

"Now you know my secret!" wailed the girl, at length lifting up her face. "It has humbled me in the dust to own it—but you bade me speak the truth!"

"And you did right, my dear child."

"It is to you alone I have confessed it!" sobbed the girl. "I should die of shame if he knew it. Oh, Mrs. Stanley, promise me that you will not tell him!"

"There will be no need. It will all be right now."

"I could not bear that he should despise me. But I was not always a poor dependent, you know. He knew me in better days."

"Hush, child. Sit in the chair, and hold my hand. Never talk of being a dependent again."

As Olive resumed her seat there was a tap at the door. A servant entered with a letter on a salver. It was addressed to his mistress.

Mrs. Stanley took it, put on her glasses, and read it. Then she pressed Olive's hand, and bade her open one of the drawers of a cabinet standing opposite the bed. In it was a small ebony box, under the tray of which was a package of bank notes.

She selected several of these, and made the girl incline them in a thick envelope. Olive understood her intention. It was not the first time she had answered the demands of her half-brother, by sending him money without consulting her solicitor.

The envelope was sealed and directed to "Richard Lumley."

Then the rest of the money was restored to its place, and the drawer locked.

"I want you to do something else for me, my child," said Mrs. Stanley.

The girl bent her head to listen.

"You know the old Indian cabinet in one of the recesses of the library?"

"I know which you mean. It is kept locked."

"Yes, dear. It is too large a piece of furniture for a bedroom, and is full of old papers and quaint curiosities, not opened this many a day. There is a secret compartment in the right hand upper drawer. That drawer, you will notice, is very deep. You must feel along the back till you touch a flat steel button, and then press the spring. That will bring out the compartment. Do you understand?"

"Yes, madam, perfectly."

"You will find some papers there, put away for safe-keeping. My lawyer knows of them; not Mr. Sherman, but Abel Reynolds. These papers are not to be touched. But there is a package of letters with California postmarks. Those letters I want destroyed without any one seeing them."

"I understand, dear Mrs. Stanley."

"You must be particular to destroy that packet of letters; to let no one see them when I am gone. They are memorials of the crimes and misdeeds of one near of kin to me. I wish I could as easily efface the record of his wrongdoing; but God may grant him repentance and reform. You will do as I tell you?"

"Be sure I will. Shall I do it to-night?"

"Not to-night. I may want to refer to them if he should cause me trouble. Not while I live, dear child. But give me no chance to see them when I am gone."

"I will not. But, dearest friend, do not speak as if you were going to leave me."

Her voice was broken by fresh sobs.

"There, do not weep, my poor child! I am satisfied now. We will talk no more on agitating subjects. Here is the key of the Indian cabinet, and of the drawer. Keep them about you."

She drew out from a pocket in the bosom of her dressing-gown two keys, fastened to a ribbon, which she put into Olive's hand. The girl put them in her bosom, securing the ribbon to her brooch.

Shortly afterward the invalid sunk into a calm sleep, watched over by her loving friend.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 281.)

Tiger Dick:

OR,
THE CASHIER'S CRIME.

A TALE OF MAN'S HATE AND WOMAN'S FAITH.

BY PHILIP S. WARNE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE TIGER CAGED.

WHEN Shadow Jim returned to the cave, after his dismissal of Pat Donovan, he found Florence unconscious from the influence of the drug, and Tiger Dick given over to such a fit of convulsions as he had never before seen upon him. Jim, never loath to "place himself on a footing with the gods," joined him; and when he rose to go on a reconnaissance to the city, though his own well-seasoned brain knew no such thing as succumbing, he left the Tiger "on high Olympus."

Shadow Jim felt no qualms of conscience at leaving a helpless girl in the power of the drunken fiend he had just quitted. As he expressed it, "he played his own hand, and calculated to put a head on the sharp that didn't follow suit."

It was well nigh daylight when he entered the city, and some time after sunrise his new disguise enabled him to pass the stables where Pat Donovan stayed, and here he saw the hound lying in his accustomed place, while a hostler was rubbing down the horse that Cecil Beaumont had ridden.

Then Shadow Jim set himself to ascertain the whereabouts of Cecil. Within an hour he was in possession of the facts that were spread like wildfire through the city. Then he set out on his return to the cave.

Meanwhile, Charley Brewster had been among those earliest informed of Cecil's return. He burst in upon the detective with the exclamation:

"Draper, you're right; he's alive!"

"Eh? Who's alive? Not—"

"Cecil Beaumont! He is now in Mr. Powell's house."

"The deuce he is!"

The detective stared at Charley in blank amazement.

"He came back last night, and is now in a state of delirium."

"Jim-jams!"

"No; he is insane."

"Fudge! Brewster, that's a lay."

"You wouldn't think so, if you were to see him."

"You have seen him?"

"Yes. He is all the time raving about Tiger Dick and Fred Powell and Miss Goldthorp. Miss Powell is the only one who can keep him quiet. I may as well tell you that she was engaged to him."

"The deuce she was! Why, he ruined her brother, and would have let him hang."

"She hasn't an idea of the sort. She thinks that he has been in some way persecuted by Tiger Dick."

"Fish! Those devils were hand and glove ten years ago. They have been working together in this whole affair, depend upon it. But has Miss Goldthorp returned?"

"No; nothing has been heard of her. Cecil keeps linking her name with Tiger Dick's, all the time warning her of him, or assuring her of protection from him."

"Look here, Brewster, there's some devilment behind this."

"It looks a great deal like it, certainly. He's got a blue line across his breast, that he says is the mark of a bullet fired from Tiger Dick's hand."

"By Jove, Brewster, those devils have had a split, and it's over this girl. I'm going to have another lay for this slippery gentleman, and if I don't bag him this time I'm a long way out of my calculations."

The detective sprung to his feet. Charley was quick to take the infection; and a few minutes later Detective Draper's select force was on its way toward Tiger Dick's retreat, under two very singular leaders.

On their way Draper suddenly cried:

"Halt!"

The next instant he fired his pistol and set off on a run, with the exclamation:

"Shadow Jim, by the Almighty!"

Rallied by Charley Brewster, the whole force joined in the pursuit. But Shadow Jim and the detective soon outstripped the rest, and were lost to view in the undergrowth.

As the chase had deviated from a direct line to the cave, Charley gave over the pursuit and

led his command straight for the opening, hoping to cut off Shadow Jim. There he was joined by Draper, who was not a little chagrined to have to report that the slippery outlaw had succeeded in eluding him.

"Anyway," said the detective, "we've headed him off; and his running to this hole in the ground shows that here's where we're going to find Tiger Dick. You, Davis and Thompson, stay outside, and shoot the devil if he shows his nose. It won't do to let him escape this time. Now, men, steady, and we'll bag him!"

This hunting human game was new to Charley Brewster's experience, and he trembled with excitement, as he followed the detective through the dark and silent passage.

A faint glimmer of light from a dark-lantern thrown on their pathway enabled them to advance without making a noise by stumbling. But it was an unnecessary precaution; for as they turned the first angle a wild burst of laughter came echoing and re-echoing down the gallery, sounding hollow and weird.

"That's our game!" whispered Draper, now advancing more rapidly and with less caution.

Suddenly a woman's cry arose, with terror and rage and despair all blended in one. Charley Brewster sprang by the detective, and a second angle came into view of the lighted cave within. Looking down the passage he was traversing, and across the lighted chamber, he saw Florence Goldthorp thrust Tiger Dick against the wall and snatch her dress out of his hands. Then she ran across the chamber, passing from view at one side, but immediately reappearing at the mouth of the gallery, torch in hand, just in time to meet Charley Brewster.

Up went her hand—there was a blinding flash—a deafening concussion—a scorching puff of smoke and fire in his face—and he staggered back against the detective! Then all was wrapped in Stygian darkness; and Charley Brewster felt a wild thrill of heart, as he thought that he had passed the bound that parts the Here from the Hereafter.

"Lights, men, lights!" cried a voice that sounded far away; and immediately half a dozen dark-lanterns flashed upon the gloom; and Charley Brewster saw dimly the form of Florence Goldthorp lying motionless at his feet, and further in the cave Tiger Dick upon his feet, staring in amazement and terror, completely sobered by this unexpected interruption.

"Stand still there, sport," chuckled the triumphant detective. "I reckon your little game's about played. We've bagged you this time, sure!"

The Tiger made a motion as if to draw a pistol.

"Hands to the front!" rung out the clear, metallic voice. "We've got a masked battery behind here, that'll soon put an end to all your troubles, if you're anxious to go from this weary world of care."

The Tiger desisted from his purpose, blanching, visibly, as the muzzle of a pistol was thrust forward until the light from one of the bull's-eyes fell upon it. While he was in a flood of light, his assailants were wholly invisible to him. He could see nothing but those eyes of flame and the black muzzle of the pistol.

"I guess you've heard of me before," pursued the detective, stepping forward into the range of light. "They call me Jim Farnsworth when I'm at home."

"Yes, I've heard enough of you," replied the Tiger, with an oath as you are destined to hear," said the detective, meaningly, drawing a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

At this Tiger Dick changed color, and made another motion toward resistance.

"Hands above your head!" cried Farnsworth, as he now knew him, bringing his pistol in a line with Tiger Dick's forehead.

With an oath of impotent rage, the outlaw complied. Then the detective stepped forward and disarmed him, following it up by snapping the cuffs on his wrists, and Tiger Dick was a captive.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TIGER'S LAST CARD.

CHARLEY BREWSTER and detective Farnsworth had the management of a little surprise-party (so they said) at Mr. Powell's residence. Through the influence of Charley, every one was banished from the parlors and the library across the hall, until all was in readiness.

There was an undercurrent of great satisfaction and joy in Charley's bearing that partially drew the banker out of his grief in spite of himself, and filled him with a vague anxiety not unmingled with an indefinite hope. But when he entered the front parlor, out off from the back one by the now closed folding-doors, and saw no one there, he turned upon Charley with a look of disappointment and inquiry.

May, Mr. Carrington and Mr. Creswell also stood in silent expectation.

"Be seated," said Charley, his face all aglow with suppressed happiness; but there was a tinge of pain, too, as he glanced at May's pale face and unnaturally brilliant eyes—"be seated. My friend here, Mr. Farnsworth, has a story to tell you."

"But not as much as you are destined to hear," said the detective, meaningly, drawing a pair of handcuffs from his pocket.

At this Tiger Dick changed color, and made another motion toward resistance.

"Hands above your head!" cried Farnsworth, as he now knew him, bringing his pistol in a line with Tiger Dick's forehead.

With an oath of impotent rage, the outlaw complied. Then the detective stepped forward and disarmed him, following it up by snapping the cuffs on his wrists, and Tiger Dick was a captive.

His tears and kisses fell upon her hair, for he loved her like a father.

Next Mr. Carrington arose, and grasped her hands, and holding her at arm's-length, gazed upon her with emotions almost too deep for expression. Then he drew her to him and touched his lips to her forehead.

"I cannot tell you," he said, "how I have mourned Charley's child, during these three terrible days!"

Mr. Powell, too, received her with feeling, for she had loved Fred, and trusted him against hope. And May—she embraced her and returned her kiss with a strange, shuddering foreboding of evil.

When they were somewhat composed, Florence said:

"Before telling you about myself, I wish to give you a little previous history, which is the real beginning of the whole affair."

Then she related all of Cecil Beaumont's plot, up to that fearful night at Dead Man's Bluff, telling her own deductions, what had been ascertained by detective Farnsworth, and Cecil's own confession to her.

During this recital, May Powell writhed in agony of spirit, but did not interrupt it by word or sign.

"In confirmation of the story thus far," said the detective, "I wish to produce two witnesses."

He stepped into the library and brought forth Tiger Dick and Billy Sanderson, the former in heavy irons and guarded by a policeman on either side. As for the "decoy duck," he had been thoroughly cowed by the fall of his principal, and had confessed everything.

Tiger Dick laughingly confirmed Florence's story, adding some facts which were unknown to her.

"But, dear madam," he added, with unabashed effrontery, "believe me, that my hostility to Mr. Powell arose, more than half, from a conviction that an angel like yourself ought to be saved from such a soft-pated milk-sop. Had not he insulted me in your presence, I might never have thought of injuring him. He pitched the trump and I played my hand on it; and as by this time he is food for the crows, I think I've got my share of the tricks."

Florence first crimsoned with indignation, and then paled at the hint of the fate that had overtaken her lover.

"Go on with the business in hand, if you please, Mr. Tiger," said the detective, with a frown. "It seems to me that you are flying the track in these gratuitous remarks."

"Oh, certainly!" replied the Tiger, pleasantly; and he then proceeded to relate the blacker plot conceived at Dead Man's Bluff, after the fight.

His auditors listened with horror to the fiendish details. When he came to Fred's exposure to the murderous pursuit of McFarland and O'Toole, the father burst forth:

"My God! and has my wronged boy fallen by the hands of these blood-thirsty assassins?"

"They're old hands at the business, and usually do their work up brown," chuckled the Tiger, enjoying his anguish.

The detective frowned angrily, and said, in a steady tone:

"Mr. Powell, three days ago your son was seen in the streets of St. Louis, but escaped again. What probability is there that those cut-throats were more vigilant than the police force there?"

This was a partial relief; and Florence now resumed the story, narrating her abduction and escape.

It would be hard to describe May's feelings. She sat with her head bowed upon her arms, as they rested on the table, as motionless as a statue.

All the others gathered about Florence, and congratulated her on her providential rescue.

"If dear Fred were only here," she said, while she mingled her tears with theirs, "our happiness would be complete."

"Florence!" came a voice that sounded like a sigh breathing through the room. She started and looked around, with a quick color in her cheeks.

"That was surely Fred's voice!" she said, in a whisper.

Charley Brewster flung back the folding-doors, and there, in the back parlor, lay Fred on a sofa, pale and thin, yet with a great happiness beaming in his face.

"Fred! Fred! Oh, he is safe!" cried Florence, and with a bound she was at his side on her knees, with his head clasped in her arms, raining tears and kisses on his face.

"Bless you, my darling!" responded the happy lover; "you always loved me! you trusted me through all!"

"Fred!" whispered his overjoyed sweetheart, with her lips to his ear, "you are thin and worn; but I will nurse you—oh, how I will nurse you!"

And she cuddled his head closer and let her happy tears fall on his emaciated cheeks.

"Oh, I am well already, sweet!" he replied. "The very sight of you has cured me."

But others claimed their share of attention, and Florence yielded at last.

"Frederick, my son, can you ever forgive me?" said the father, overcome with remorse and love and happiness.

"It was our very love for you, boy, that made us so hard on you. The enormity of it, in you, crushed us," said the grandfather, in humiliation at his almost fatal mistake.

"Father—grandfather—no more," replied the generous Fred. "I see how you have suffered. I never knew the depth of your love for me until now. May, have you no welcome for me?"

She stood gazing at him in bewilderment, but at his words aroused herself with a start, and the next moment fell upon his neck in wild hysterics. It seemed as if the floodgates of her soul were opened, so unrestrained was her weeping. And Charley Brewster—his heart was wrung with sympathy for her.

there was an unutterable depth of woe in her face that awed him into unquestioning compliance.

"Is that your father, May?" asked the maniac, and without waiting for an answer, addressed him:

"Sir, I do not attempt to extenuate my crime. I have listened and heard it all rehearsed to you by yonder fiend. But do not trust him implicitly. Listen to my defense. As ever before, he first incited me to the conspiracy against your son. Listen!

"Ages and ages ago, when we were on earth, my restless spirit fell a prey to that excitement that induced them to leave home and everything that they most prized, and go in quest of gold, that yellow gold that turned men's brains. But I did not go alone. I had a cousin. Oh, how I loved him!—loved him, did I say? Ah! he was my other self! They were sisters—his mother and mine—and brought us up in the love which they felt for each other.

"I have said he was my other self. It was literally true in point of physical appearance. We were so like that our nearest friends could distinguish us only by a scar on Tom's lip, the result of an accident in boyhood. But while I was wild and wayward, he was gentle and good. Yet this very difference drew us all the nearer together in our love.

"I could not go without him. I represented to him the marvelous wealth that we might amass in the new Eldorado, where men arose in the morning penniless, and went to bed at night worth millions; I told him of the comforts and luxuries with which he would be able to surround his mother when he returned, a man with his fortune made, after an absence of two or three years. Then I saw his eyes sparkle and the color come into his cheek, and I knew he would go.

"We went; and there I met yonder demon. From the day that his basilisk eyes first rested upon me, I was doomed. They called him King Monte; and in the wild orgies over which he presided, all that was good in my nature was burned out by the liquid hell that I took in at my mouth. Oh! those days of remorse and agony, and those nights of hellish excitement, when I would have staked my soul on the turn of a card! And Tom, he clung to me and pleaded with me, and even wept over my destruction. And this demon sat slowly turning the cards, ever with that fiendish smile on his countenance, ever with his eyes burning into my soul and filling my veins with liquid fire! And day by day the accursed appetite for alcohol grew upon me; and every day saw me more confirmed in that madness which waits upon chance.

"Then, when I was wrecked in body and soul, and a beggar—when I was on the verge of delirium tremens, and the very clothes on my back were mine only on sufferance—they had been won—had I won by yonder smiling fiend, who generously forebore to assert his rights and leave me naked—in such a state Tom came to me, and with tears in his eyes, and adjuring me in the name of the dear ones we had left, begged me to cut loose from the influences that were dragging me to perdition, and go with him. He had found gold enough to make us both rich. It was ready at our hand. We had but to take possession of it, and then return home, with our highest anticipations more than realized. He would share it with me freely; but knowing my weakness, he first exacted a promise of total abstinence from liquor and a renunciation of gambling for one and all.

"Who could have resisted his appeal? I promised. Ah! how light a thing is a promise—a mere breath. Then he took me to an old, abandoned shaft in the mountains, which appeared not to have been visited for years. There he had found a cache containing gold enough for both our fortunes, and near it lay a skeleton, doubtless the remains of the luckless miner, who had not lived to take away the treasure that he had accumulated.

"Again, how light a thing is a promise!—a spider's web to bind a maniac! With the possession of gold, came again, with power intensified by the very barrier that stood in the way of its indulgence, as rushing waters pile up before an obstruction, the insane longing to again tempt the goddess of fortune. Why multiply words? He found me again at the accursed board. In my madness I had awakened the suspicions of my destroyer touching our discovery of a great treasure.

"Then Tom forced me away. For once his gentle nature, smarting under a sense of wrong and treachery, asserted itself. He reproached me with the folly and ingratitude that had ruined not only myself but him. And then—oh, God!—I struck him. I have told you that I was on the verge of delirium tremens; I was crazed with remorse and shame; I hated myself for my baseness; and in my agony I knew not what I did. I struck him; he reeled and fell, down, down, into that yawning shaft! Oh, what a look he gave me, as he toppled over into that abyss! It haunted me all through the years of torture that followed; its reproachful eyes looked sorrowfully at me in moments of remorse; its terror-struck face arose amid the demon conjurations of delirium, goading me deeper and deeper into the maelstrom of dissipation in the vain struggle to elude a specter that ever followed.

"Ha! Cecil! This! he! Tom! Tom! you know I loved you! You know that I would have stricken off my right hand before it should have injured you! Forgive me! forgive me, Tom! Do not look at me like that! I tell you it was not I; it was the demon that possessed me! Oh, Heaven! he will not listen to me! Oh! those eyes of fire! how they burn and sear my soul! Take him away! Oh, God! take him away!"

The maniac shrank, cowering and shivering, with his hands over his eyes.

"Cecil! Cecil!" whispered May, "be calm. He is gone."

The maniac clung to her hand, and, shrinking close to her side, said:

"May, you will not let him come again? You will not let him look at me with those eyes? I did not mean to kill him. You will tell him, May, if he comes!"

"Yes—yes!" whispered the agonized girl, gazing with love and pity and sorrow upon the wreck before her.

Then he resumed his story.

"What happened next I do not know; only this demon was hovering about me. He haunted me day and night. His baleful eyes never for a moment relaxed their eager searching in my brain for the secret of my hidden wealth—that gold all reeking with the blood of him whom I loved best of all the world! Waking or sleeping, his fetid breath was ever on my cheek, his ear over at my lips—waiting, waiting for the secret! And all the time he kept shuffling the cards, and clinking the gold, and luring me into the old snare. And he made the wine flash and sparkle, until the demon of appetite burst its chains, and in desperation I grasped the cup. Then how he chuckled and laughed! He knew that he had me then. I was in a whirling hell of excitement, and soon sat at the table opposite him. I bet upon one

card again and again, doubling the stake every time, determined to force Fortune to my will. But I lost. Every time turned up something else, until he refused to take my word longer. I was mad! I thought that one more chance would surely win. Then he proposed that the stake be my secret. I refused. He charged me point-blank with the murder of my cousin. He saw me cower beneath his eye. Then he proposed that my secret be pitched against his silence. If I won I should go free. If he won then my secret and half of my gold. Ah! that gold—that blood-dripping gold! I would have given it all for one moment of peace! We played. I staked all upon the same card for the last time. I lost! Ah! the devil helped his own—his ally won!

"Then he chuckled, he laughed, he taunted me with the blood on his hands—the crimson stain on my soul! He had filled my veins with the fires of hell. My brain seethed and whirled in delirium. Goaded to madness by his sneers and fiendish triumph, I shot him and fled. Ha! ha! how I laughed, as I clutched my gold and thought of him as writhing in the agonies of death!

"But I had not escaped him. His spirit was added to Tom's. The one was an angel, the other a devil. The one looked sorrow and reproach; the other was a frowning Nemesis, ever thirsting for revenge. Together they haunted me by day, and in my sleep they filled my dreams with horror and agony.

"One day, after years of mad revel in the very center of the maelstrom, my evil genius confronted me in the streets of New York, and I knew that my bullet had not done its work. Then I fled, I know not how; for the delirium was upon me, and for weeks I lay just between life and death.

"When reason again asserted herself I found myself watched over by an angel. A Quakeress, they called her, but she will ever be an angel to me. She drew my feet from the tangled way, and I resolved to begin life anew. When I was healed I came to you, and you know how well I kept my resolve. I did keep it, until an evil hour drew me into speculation in grain—that other and respectable form of gambling. Then, when the firm ground of principle and uprightness was sinking beneath me, this demon again found me out."

"To claim, at last, his long-deferred revenge!" It was Tiger Dick's voice that rung through the room in clarion tones. He had watched his opportunity and snatched a pistol with his manacled hands. A sharp report blended with his words; and as he was borne to the ground by the detective's force who threw himself upon him, Cecil Beaumont reeled and fell upon his face, stone dead, with a bullet through his heart!

A woman's cry arose amid the confusion of exclamations. May Powell gazed for a moment in stunned bewilderment, and then fell across the body of the man who had injured her so deeply—upon whom she had lavished all the wealth of her heart!

Charley Brewster sprang forward and lifted her in his arms, and with a sinking heart and swimming brain bore her to her chamber. A thin stream of blood issued from between her lips and stained her pillow—she had ruptured a blood-vessel.

Frantically he fled down the stairs and out of the house for a doctor; but it was of no avail. She lay upon her pillow like a broken lily. Her father held her hand. She pressed it and looked as if she wished to speak. He bent his lips to her ear and caught the whisper:

"Father, I loved him!" Then her grasp relaxed, and she was free from her sorrow.

Detective Farnsworth finished the interrupted story, telling how the generous Tom, forgiving all his wrongs, had gone in search of Cecil (whose real name was Ernest Elroy) in order to relieve the anxiety of a heart-broken mother. The detective was after Tiger Dick on account of a murder which had forced him to fly from California. Farnsworth and Tom Tracy had been in communication with each other, and when the latter ran across the Tiger he telegraphed for the detective, who arrived only to find his colleague buried in the place of the cousin of whom he was in search.

A long line of carriages wound through the cemetery, and May Powell, the loving and wronged, was laid in her peaceful rest; and, as the man of God said in a solemn tone: "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust!" and the clouds fell upon the coffin-lid, Charley Brewster covered his white face with his hands, with a feeling of utter desolation and awe.

Afterward, when a marble shaft pointed heavenward above the loved remains, Fred and Florence stood beside it.

"Florence," he said, "I see in this the fruits of my sin. But for my weakness, all this trouble could not have come upon us, and she would still be among us."

"Hush, Fred," she replied; "we are all in His hands. We cannot retrieve the past by useless repentings."

"No; but we may shape the future. And here I promise you that never while life lasts shall another drop of liquor pass my lips."

She looked up at him with a sudden radiance, and as she pressed his arm, said:

"God has answered my prayer!"

Tiger Dick was taken back to the scene of his early crime, and there paid the penalty. His accomplices, McFarland and O'Toole, ended their career with that relic of barbarism, a confession from the scaffold, while the "decoy duck" was given ample opportunity to meditate on the way of the transgressor behind the bars. Jimmy Duff still "sings the whisky" at his "end of the shop," but a new man "manipulates the pasteboards" in the place of Tiger Dick. As for Shadow Jim, his subtlety enabled him to elude pursuit; and after following the fortunes of Tiger Dick to their fall, he "went West," to find a fertile field for the exercise of his peculiar genius in the checkered life of the Rocky Mountains, where he put into practice much that he had learned from the experience of his fallen master.

It is a year since last we saw our friends. The organ is filling the brilliantly-lighted and densely-thronged edifice with softest music. There is a rustle of satin, and the bridal couple passes up the aisle to the altar. Charley Brewster is groomsmen, with a half-sigh of tender melancholy as his thoughts go out to May. Mr. Carrington gives away the bride. He claims it as his right, his last act of affection for the Charley of his boyhood's friendship. Mr. Powell looks on, proud in his son, and happy in the daughter he is giving him.

The organ bursts into the glad peal of the wedding march, and Fred and Florence have found recompense for all their sufferings.

THE END.

Mrs. Fleming's new story next week.

MORNING SYMBOLS.

BY JAMES HUNGERFORD.

"This world is a parable—the habitation of symbols—the phantoms of spiritual things immortal shown in material shape."—LE FANU.

Swelled in my breast, "I have been dead," I cried, "And now I live."—WORKS OF LE FANU.

In the morn's exceeding luster, Sitting where the flowers cluster, Blooms of every pleasant fragrance, All the colors of the rainbow, In continuous wreaths adorning, This, the festive bower of morning, Gazed I on a scene of beauty, Smiling the gorgeous light.

In the arbor where I rested, Through the trailing vines invested With unusual beauty, borrowed From the glory of the hour, Came the sunlight, ray-fingered, Like a painter, where it lingered, Giving rarer hues and texture Unto every leaf and flower.

To the northward, waters leaping Down the circling hills, were peeping, With a weird and varied luster, Through the branches of a wood; And, in plumes the scene befitting, Birds from bough to bough were flitting, Giving life and wondrous beauty To the verdant solitude.

To the southward, fair before me Lay the sea, in all the glory Of the morning's outspreading, Like a boundless field of light; With a smooth and tranquil motion, Over that splendid field of ocean, Moved the bark, sustained and wafted By their airy wings of white.

Eastward, westward, wide-extending, And in either direction blending With the hues of clear horizons, Lay a fair and shining plain, Where, in bright and varied order, From the hill's encircling border To the curving line of ocean, Waved the yet unripened grain.

And, the source of all the glory Of the lovely scene before me— Over land and sky and ocean, Lay a fair and shining plain, Over forest, field and mountain, Over flower and bird and fountain, With a luster all unclouded, Shone the eastward orb of day.

Scene with peace and brightness laden, In thy symbols saw I Aiden— For to me awhile lay open All the inner life of things— While the angels, in their duties, Vitalized these forms of beauty, Making all a joy and blessing By their tender ministrations.

As I sat in happy musing, From each object thoughts confusing, God to me, through this sweet vision, Deigned his heavenly peace to give; Then my mind behind him clearly, Then my heart embraced him dearly, And, for all the after ages, Then my soul began to live.

Only a Flirtation.

BY H. M. GEORGE.

"WELL, Earle, it seems that we are to lose you. You have snapped at the bait held so alluringly before you, and have allowed yourself to be caught by a stray curl, a smile, and a pair of dark eyes turned bewitchingly upon you. The tempter has been caught, and Florence Dinsmore is triumphant. I congratulate you."

The handsome lips of Cecil Hamilton curled sarcastically as he spoke thus to his friend, Earle Trevor. The two young men were sitting on the piazza of Beach Cliff Hotel, enjoying an afternoon smoke, as we introduce them to the reader.

"You do her injustice, Cecil," answered his companion, as he took his cigar from his mouth, while a long wreath of smoke floated upward from his lips: "Florence Dinsmore is pure and true, and a perfect lady. She has never tried to win me by any art of hers. There is no bait or trap in the question. And as for me, I am proud to confess that it is the love of my life."

"Bah! you are getting heated, Earle. Pray restrain your enthusiasm. But I shall make due allowances, for a man is not himself when he is in love. I had hoped, however, that you were too old to make a fool of yourself. But I hardly think it will last, and the speaker tilted back in his chair and again resumed his half-burned cigar.

A flush mantled the cheek of Earle Trevor. "You are an incorrigible cynic, Cecil," he said, "and it will take one of the fair sex to convert you. The time may come when you will regard matrimony in a different light from what you now do."

"Whew! a Daniel come to judgment. But don't flatter yourself, old boy. I fancy I have seen enough of the tender passion not to be taken in by any of the fair frail ones at the last hour. By the way, Earle, have you seen the last arrival?"

"No; who is it? It's nobody that I know, of course."

"I am not so sure of that," replied Cecil. "If I am not mistaken she is an old friend of yours. I recollect well the glowing letters you wrote me at the time. You were staying in some out-of-the-way old place, and this charming Dian crossed your path. Whether you left her as you found her is not in my knowledge."

"Can't you let the past be bygones, Cecil?" cried Earle, with a clouded brow. "Stop your trifling now, and tell me who it is."

"Of course you can have no idea, there are so many of them in the forbidden past. And you could not have seen her arrive, for you were playing the sweet to that *fiancée* of yours. She is a stunner, I tell you, one of your tall, stately ones. Florence Dinsmore is a wax doll compared with her. She must have changed greatly since you knew her. Why I should as soon think of playing with a panther as making love to such a woman."

"Well."

"Oh, you are waiting for her name! Well, it is Ardelle Grahame."

Earle Trevor's dark face paled, and there was a perceptible quiver in his voice as he exclaimed:

"Ardelle Grahame! What is she here for? Are you sure it is her?"

"Quite sure. I saw her as she came in, and read her name in the hotel register. Straightway I was reminded that the name was familiar, and then I recollected your letters. Hist! there she goes now, and Miss Dinsmore is with her. Do you not recognize her?"

"By Jove! yes," responded Earle, as he gazed down upon the croquet-ground, where a party of players were strolling. "She has changed as you say, but I should know her anywhere. I must warn Florence against her. I shall not like to have them associate. It seems like a ghost of the past to meet her here."

"You speak as if you hated her."

"I do. Five years is not so short a time but what a revulsion of feeling may occur. It was only a flirtation on my part, though she was as lovely a flower as I could wish to meet. But the simple thing thought I was

in deadly earnest, and took it greatly to heart as I afterward learned. I thought she was dead, but it seems she lived over her troubles and has become quite a star of society."

It was true. Five years before Ardelle Grahame had been a thoughtless, happy maiden, upon whom Earle Trevor had chanced to stumble in one of his rural visits among the green hills of Vermont. Poor, beautiful, and romantic, her fresh young heart was easily won by the careless, polished man of the world. It was "only a flirtation" to Earle Trevor, but to the unsophisticated girl the moonlight walks, the low whisperings of eternal love, were something more than amusements for an idle hour. But it had passed. What she had once deemed sacred memories to be cherished while life endured, and carried even beyond the grave, had turned to bitter ashes and consuming hate. She was a haughty, imperious woman now, a belle in society, and ready to return scorn for scorn with the blighter of her affections.

Her appearance at Beach Cliff Hotel was peculiarly distasteful to Earle Trevor. To do him justice his whole heart's love had been given to Miss Dinsmore, and to behold this perpetual reminder of his days of folly was unpleasant and irritating. Besides, in spite of all his remonstrances, Florence's intimacy with the offending beauty daily increased, and he had but few opportunities of seeing her alone.

The days and weeks went by. Ardelle Grahame and Florence Dinsmore became like sisters and were seldom separated. They read together, rode together, attended parties together, and went boating together. Indeed there seemed something remarkable in the strength of the friendship which seemed to exist between the fair girl and her more strong-minded companion. Earle Trevor could not conceal his anxiety. He was therefore highly pleased when one morning Florence told him that Miss Grahame was to depart for the city the next day.

"And oh, Earle, I am so sorry," she went on, her dark eyes swimming in tears. "I shall be very lonesome when she is gone. But I forgot, you do not like her."

"No, Florence, I dislike her very much. She is a strange girl—one whom I should be loath to be your friend," and he smiled gravely down at the bright, eager face raised to his.

"She is strange," said Florence, placing her hand confidentially upon his shoulder. "And she talks so strangely about you at times. She says that you are her enemy and that she hates you. Once she said that it would be better for me to die than ever to marry you. It frightened me to hear her talk so. What could she mean, Earle?"

He looked at her keenly, biting his blanched lips. "I cannot imagine, darling. She may have become embittered in consequence of some disappointment which she has received. But I shall not allow her to talk so to my little flower. I am glad, Florence, that she is going away, and that you will be all mine again."

"We are going to take our last sail together this morning, and then I am going to help her pack, as she is to start in the first train. Ah! there comes Ardelle now. Good-by!"

She flung a kiss at him and darted away, while Earle Trevor stood gazing after her. How beautiful she looked to him as she stood there on the beach, with the sunshine rippling on the graceful folds of her jaunty dress, her golden hair blowing out on the warm breeze! It was a picture he remembered well in after years.

He saw them sail away and anticipated no danger. Why should he? The waters were calm and bright, and Miss Grahame was a capital oarsman, and had been known to venture out at sea in her frail boat, even in the midst of storms. So through the long, bright day he waited for his loved one.

But when evening came and the wanderers had not returned Earle Trevor grew worried and anxious. To make matters worse black clouds were thronging from the west with every indication of a storm. He went out and paced wildly to and fro upon the sands, peering anxiously at the dark sea and black clouds. A great horror came upon him.

Would Florence never come! Would the storm overtake them and keep his loved one from his sight forever?

He shuddered with deadly anguish at the thought, and the first prayer he had uttered for many a long year arose from his heart.

"God help her! God help her and bring her safe to me!"

The storm came on. Flashes of lurid lightning shot from the ebon clouds above him, and the savage roar of thunder shook the earth. Driven into tumult by the fury of the storm the white-crested waves foamed and dashed against the beach where he stood as if to mock his grief.

Many anxious groups gathered in the hotel parlors, and fires were built upon the beach, which blazed up despite the flood of water, flashing their spectral light far out on the mad billows. There was a call for a boat, and as it was brought forward Earle Trevor seized the oars and sprang into it. But before he stirred from the shore Cecil Hamilton interrupted him.

"Earle Trevor, are you mad? Your boat would crack like an eggshell in yonder foaming waters. Besides there is no need. God help you to bear up, but Florence—"

Is dead.

Starting blankly into his friend's face he read in those pitying eyes the truth, and with a deep groan fell senseless upon the sand.

Two forms had been drawn out on the beach, clasped in each other's arms, one slight and graceful, with a look of horror and anguish upon the cold, dead face—the other tall and stately, the stern features full of joy and triumph. Beautiful even in death Ardelle Grahame lay with her rival clasped to her bosom, her dark hair mingled with the fair locks of the murdered victim.

Yes, murdered! For Earle Trevor learned the terrible truth after he had regained his senses. As he entered the hotel a servant handed him a sealed envelope, saying that Miss Grahame left it for him. He broke the seal and read:

"Earle Trevor, I hate you with the hate of a scorned woman. For the long years I have lived but one thought—*revenge*. Now I strike the blow. You love Florence Dinsmore. To-day she dies. It is pitiful to sacrifice her for that for which she is not to blame, but thus I can more effectually gain my revenge. And besides, after all, it is better for her to die young and innocent as she is than to marry the bitter lesson I have learned. Prud man, you little thought that the poor girl whose love you won to scorn would one day reap a hearty vengeance. You did not dream that a woman could hate as she had loved, with her whole life, her soul. You feel it now, and I exit in the misery you will know in the life of horror you will lead. For before high Heaven you are her murderer. I am but the servant of destiny."

The blow was terrible, but if his punishment was severe his sin had been great. He had thought lightly of blighting the trust and destroying the faith of a woman's heart, and

this was the retribution. He never forgot the blow, and, though an old man now, Earle Trevor has never since been seen to smile.

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It is quite generally the custom to take strong liver stimulants for the cure of liver complaint, and both the mineral and vegetable kingdoms have been diligently searched to procure the most drastic and poisonous purgatives, in order to produce a powerful effect upon the liver, and arouse the sluggish and enfeebled organ. This system of treatment is on the same principle as that of giving a weak and debilitated man large portions of brandy to enable him to do a certain amount of work. When the stimulant is withheld, the organ, like the system, gradually relapses into a more torpid or sluggish and weakened condition than before. What then is wanted? Medicines, which, while they cause the bile to flow freely from the liver, as that organ is toned into action, will not overwork and thus debilitate it, but will, when their use is discontinued, leave the liver strengthened and healthy. Such remedies are found in Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and Purgative Pellets.

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THE WOLF AND THE LAMB.
(In New Clothing.)

BY JOE TOT, JR.

A wolf somewhat stuck up and proud,
As wolves sometimes will be,
Went down to extinguish his thirst in a little
babbling brook
That meandered on the sea.
"Water is better far to drink
Than lager beer," said he;
Only the night before the aforesaid wolf
Had been out upon a spree.
He'd hardly drank a barrelful
When what should this wolf see
But the clear, limpid stream turn into by-
drant water.
And thought, "How can this be?"
But when he came to look up-stream,
As plain as plain could be
He saw a little bit of a useless lambkin
In the water to his knee.
"May it please your royal in-
significance," said he,
"To remove your feet out of the water which I
have to drink,
And straightway turn and flee."
"Keep your mouth shut, you old humbug,"
The small sheep answered free,
"And don't interfere with other people's busi-
ness.
Or it may be bad for thee."
"I'll only shut my mouth when you
Between my teeth shall be,
And with one easy lesson I'll instruct you in
Lamblike gentility."
The little muttonkin said "Bosh!"
You do not frighten me!"
And that wolf proceeded to go for to slap his
muttonkin's
Quicker'n one could see,
But ah, that lamb developed powers
The wolf had failed to see,
And in three shakes of a dead and defunct
sheep's ear he was all chewed up—
That wolf had ceased to be!

MORAL:
The moral of these tales is plain
To either he or she,
If any gentleman or lady muddies the creek
from which you are lapping
You'd better let them be.

LEAVES
From an Actor's Life;
OR,
Recollections of Plays and Players.

BY GEO. L. AIKEN.

XII.—Ophelia Pelby—Mrs. Pelby's Wax Statu-
ary—The Last Supper—The Proposed
Voyage to England—Shipwreck—Mrs. Pel-
by's Last Appearance—Lady Macbeth—
Yankee Stars—Dan Marble—Sam Patch,
the Jumper—Marble Appears as Damon—A
Ludicrous End to a Serious Play.

THOUGH Mr. William Pelby did not possess
his father's talent, it was transmitted largely
to his daughter, whom he had named Ophelia,
after Shakespeare's heroine.

At the time I remember her she was known
as Mrs. Anderson, having married a gentleman
of that name, and was using it in her profes-
sional capacity, though many actresses retain
their maiden names upon the play bills, after
marriage.

She was handsome, accomplished and grace-
ful, and excelled in such characters as Juliet,
Ophelia, Julia, in "The Hunchback," Cordelia,
in "King Lear," and Mariana, in "The Wife."
She was a great favorite with the theater-
goers, and maintained this good estimation for
many years.

Mrs. Pelby was a very talented woman, not
only as an actress but as an artist in wax-
work. She constructed many groups of statu-
ary, life-size, principally Scriptural subjects,
which gave her fame as well as profit. Her
master-piece was "The Last Supper," in which
the Savior and his disciples were formed in
wax with lifelike fidelity.

For several years after her husband's death
she exhibited this group and finally sold it for
a large sum—I have heard it stated as five
thousand dollars.

She made this sale in order to secure the
necessary funds for her daughter, Mrs. Ander-
son—"the fair Ophelia"—to appear in Lon-
don. She expected that she would meet with
a flattering success there, and undoubtedly she
would have done so, had the Fates been propi-
tious; but disaster befell them.

The vessel in which they embarked for Eng-
land, a new bark, called the Anglo-Saxon, was
met by a gale and driven ashore on Cape
Ann's rocky coast, and though they, with the
other passengers and crew, escaped a watery
grave, Mrs. Anderson's handsome and expensive
wardrobe, prepared expressly for her
English engagements, was lost.

This misfortune compelled them to return to
Boston and abandon their proposed trip to
England.

Finding that the theater did not yield her a
profit she rented it to Bird, Wright and Fenno.
Bird was a dealer in second-hand goods, and
found the money. Wright had been the stage-
manager, and Fenno the treasurer of the the-
ater under Mrs. Pelby; and she was surprised
and mortified to find that it paid under their
management. She could not understand why
or how they could make money for themselves
when they could not make it for her.

I do not know why it should have puzzled
her, though, for people always work more for
their own interests than anybody else's.

Mrs. Pelby made her last appearance on the
stage as Lady Macbeth for the benefit of J. J.
Prior, then a young actor of promise, now "food
for worms." Since I began writing these sketches
his death has been chronicled in the daily
press. He died in his dressing-room in a West-
ern theater, of heart disease, "with harness
on his back." He was a member of a company
supporting Lotta, that peculiar star-actress
whom John Brougham has very aptly and
wittily described as a "dramatic cocktail."

Among the celebrities who appeared at the
old National under Mr. Pelby's management
was that eccentric comedian, Dan Marble. He
introduced a new style of acting, and a new
kind of play, and was very successful. He
appeared as Sam Patch, the great jumper, and
took a leap of forty feet from the flies—the
canvas hangings above the scenes—to the
stage, disappearing through a trap masked in
by painted water.

This play was founded upon the exploits of
the veritable Sam Patch, who made a fame as
a jumper, but jumped once too often down the
Genesee Falls, at Rochester, N. Y., and lost
his life by his foolhardiness.

This play was written by Mr. E. H. Thomp-
son, of Buffalo, and it proved very attractive.
When there is a good chance for a man to
break his neck, or some other less valuable
limb, people like to have a chance to see it.
It is almost as good a treat as going to a me-
nagerie to see the lion-tamer put his head in
the beast's mouth, with pleasing anticipations
of seeing it bitten off.

I never saw Sam Patch played, and I was
never called upon to play in it; whether I
have been deprived of a pleasure, or escaped an
infection, I cannot state.

However, as Wallace Thaxter, the dramatic
critic of the *Saturday Evening Gazette* (a
great theatrical paper in Boston, in its day)

used to say, when he could not praise and did
not wish to condemn, it "answered the pur-
pose."

Dan Marble made money; and that is about
the sum-total of every man's exertions, on or
off the stage.

He had two competitors in his peculiar line,
however, Yankee Hill and Yankee Silsbee.
At this time the nasal twang, the bell-crown
hat, the long-tailed coat, the short waistcoat,
and the striped pants, with long straps, took
possession of the stage and flourished like a
green bay-tree.

The personators of Yankees, or Down-East-
ers, grew and multiplied, until, like the Kil-
keney cats, they devoured each other.

The first Yankee comedian, so called, was, I
think, a Mr. G. H. Hill. I saw him, and I—
well, I will not speak of him now; he has been
dead these many years.

"Green be the turf above thee!"

as Fitz Green Halleck sung over his lamented
friend, Drake.

Then came Yankee Marble, then Yankee
Silsbee, Yankee Hackett—better known as the
representative of Falstaff—Yankee Adams,
Yankee Locke, Yankee Robinson, Yankee
Miller, and McVicker, the Chicago manager,
Yankee it for a time with Dan Marble's plays,
which he purchased from his widow after Mar-
ble's death. Marble died young; not forty
years of age, with cholera, in Louisville, Ken-
tucky.

Dan Marble was irresistibly droll in his
Yankee stories, possessing a quaint and origi-
nal humor, but, like other funny men, he be-
lieved at first that he was fitted to be a trage-
dian.

At the American Theater, New Orleans, he
assayed the character of Damon, in the last
act of the play of "Damon and Pythias." He
thought he could enact this character equal to
Forrest, and he tried strenuously to impress
this belief upon the minds of the large audi-
ence who had assembled to witness his effort.
It was his benefit night, and, after appearing
in several of his Yankee specialties, he gave
them Damon, in the last act, as a finish, and
it proved the funniest part of the programme.

In the last scene when Pythias stands before
the block and ax, and the suppers, as citizens of
Syracuse, are shouting without, and the doomed
man, with his "fair Calanthe" clinging to
his breast, begins to feel a thrill of hope, and
the approach of Damon is thus heralded, the
audience being worked up to the proper pitch
of excitement for Damon's appearance, Dan
Marble dashed on with Forrestian energy.
He had bespattered his face and daubed his legs
with mud, to heighten the effect, and
looked as if he had been dragged through a
mud-hole.

"Damon!" exclaims the tyrant, Dionysius.
Dan made a dash for the platform contain-
ing the block and ax, and landed upon it with
a flying jump.

"I am here, standing on my throne!" he
yelled.

At this thrilling moment his fleshings broke
from their fastenings and slid down, revealing
Dan's bare and attenuated calves, and the noble
Damon was obliged to squat down in a sudden
and very undignified manner to hide his legs,
while the prompter, equal to the emergency,
rung down the curtain, which descended
amidst the most uproarious peals of laughter
that ever rung within the walls of a theater.

That was Dan Marble's last appearance as
Damon.

A Rogue's Game.

BY CORA CHESTER.

It was a cunning little house, with odd point-
ed gables, and numerous bay-windows peeping
out from its every angle upon the sloping lawn
below, and stood back in its modest way from
the more pretentious buildings adorning the
principal village street.

Perched in one of its comfortable recesses
sat Ritta Lee, the heavy curtains closing about
her and throwing a crimson light on glossy
hair, rounded cheeks and bewitching dimples.
The gray eyes had a troubled, anxious look in
their depths that belied the soft lines about the
pretty mouth, for Ritta was not dreaming
over a dead past, nor yet picturing an Arcadian
future; the troublesome, perplexing pres-
ent engrossed her tired brain and drove hap-
piness from her thoughts as though it had never
been a welcome visitor in her past life; a
guest Ritta had once thought she could never
live without.

Crushed in one hand was a letter she had
but a few moments before eagerly seized from
the postman's hand, and these were the words
that had chased all thoughts of wealth and a
settled future from her mind:

"MISS RITTA LEE:
"DEAR MADAM:—I write to announce to you the
arrival of Gerald Lee, Esq., at my office Saturday
morning. He was not lost at sea five years ago as
reported, but has returned after a lingering illness
in India, to claim his late father's estate. This of
course will render your claim to your late uncle's
property null and void, and believe me I deeply
sympathize with you in your disappointment. In
your changed fortunes I am yours, as ever to com-
mand."
Attorney and Counselor at Law."

Demolished forever the airy castles Ritta
had been building since her uncle's death; lost to
her the joy of being courted and sought after
as the heiress of the great Lee estate. If it
had not been so publicly announced, she could
have borne it better, she declared to herself
with fresh sobs, but to be stripped of all
these honors in a single day was cruel—
worse than anything she had ever dreamed
could have happened to her!

You see she was no story-book heroine,
ready to battle with poverty single-handed,
but only a commonplace, silly girl, overrating
perhaps, as women will, the value of fine
clothes and summer friends.

But, to do Ritta justice, her grief was not
altogether selfish. In her generous heart
arose a great sorrow for her invalid mother
and young sister left with her in comparative
poverty. With swimming eyes she reread
the letter, then resolutely placed it in her
pocket and dried her tears.

"They shall not know of it to-night. It
will come soon enough to poor mother, and
dear old Sue shall have one more gay evening
at least. I wonder what Hugh will say?"
with suddenly paling cheeks. "How foolish I
am to dream that it could make any difference
with him!"

The light of a new joy beamed in the
troubled eyes.

"This will prove to mother and the rest that
it is Ritta Lee, and not Ritta Lee's money,
Hugh Desborough loves."

Poor child! she had yet to learn that her
poor little self, stripped of her wealth, would
be of little consequence to the dear five hun-
dred who now fawned around the heiress of
half a million.

Ritta, with her mother and Sue, had lived
five years now in the gable-pointed house, and
happy indeed had these three been together.

With fawning sycophants, empty-headed fops
and admiring friends surrounding her, it was
no wonder that pretty Ritta Lee's head had
been half turned by her suddenly-acquired af-
luence.

Like a sensible girl Ritta walked quietly in-
to her mother's sick-room, shook up the pil-
lows, pulled down the shades, and aided her
mother to rise, as if nothing had happened.

"Mamma, dear, will I light the lamp?"
then with a forced little laugh. "You know
the old gentleman himself perambulates the
each to-night, and I shall make it unusually
brilliant here in order to frighten away his
Satanic majesty."

A ghost of a smile illumined her mother's
pale face.

"Are you worse to-night, mother? I guess
I'll give up the party to-night, and Sue can go
without me just as well."

Resolutely ignoring the fact that this party
had seemed to her the ultimatum of all things
ever since she had heard of Hugh Desborough's
return from Europe and expected attendance
there that evening.

He had sent her only a few written words
since his arrival, and how Ritta longed for
just one glimpse of his handsome face, to see
that he had not changed in spite of his foreign
travels and two years abroad!

He would ever seem the same bright, hand-
some Hugh to her, her *beau ideal* of a noble,
disinterested lover.

Her mother's voice awakened her from her
day-dreams.

"No, Ritta, mother couldn't allow you to
sacrifice yourself in that manner. Run up and
dress, and Rosetta will read to me till you and
Sue come home."

Inclination said yes, and Ritta listened, as
almost any girl of eighteen would, and ran up-
stairs with flushed cheeks and beating heart,
to the room she and Sue shared together. Only
as Rosetta was dressing her hair, and she caught
the light of a diamond dagger, dexterously
holding up the loose coil on her neck, did the
memory of that terrible letter rise to haunt
her with its promise of trouble for the future.

Who was this unknown cousin that he should
arise from the grave and rob her of all that
made life dear to her? Why could he not
have died in India. She wished—then she
sundered at her own wickedness and tried to
chase the wicked thought away.

Rosetta completed her toilet; she ran out to
her nest of a carriage, and at last she and Sue
stood together in Mrs. Larrabee's lighted par-
lors. Some one drew her hand within his arm,
and a well-known voice whispered:

"Will you welcome me back for old times'
sake, Ritta?"

"For your own sake, Mr. Desborough," with a
very perceptible tremor in her voice, and sud-
denly flushing face. It was cruel of him to take
her at such a disadvantage, she declared, half-
angrily to draw her out of the cozied parlors into a quiet alcove.

"Kind Mrs. Larrabee evidently remem-
bered her own young days when she arranged
this romantic nook," said Hugh, refusing to re-
lease Ritta's hand, which he still held firmly
within his own. "Ritta, in spite of the novel-
ty and excitement of the past two years I
have longed for this moment with a longing
unutterable. Now that I have you here close
beside me I verily believe you are longing to
run away."

He glanced down, with a teasing, half-quiz-
zical smile, at the drooping face of his com-
panion.

Well, the end of all this sentimental skim-
ishing was that Hugh Desborough then and
there formally made an offer of his heart and
hand to Ritta Lee, the reputed heiress of half
the real estate in W—.

"But, Hugh," stammered Ritta, with a
strange hesitancy to test her jewel—she would
soon prove whether it were paste or not—"read
this, and then take back what you have said
if you choose."

She tried to control her voice and speak
bravely.

By his lip and a sudden pallor passed
over his face as he read the letter. He was
about to turn and speak when Mrs. Larrabee
entered with a tall blonde man of thirty or
thereabouts.

"Ritta, we have been looking everywhere
for you. The games have commenced, and
here is a cousin of yours come across the seas
to claim your relationship, I believe. Miss
Ritta, Mr. Gerald Lee."

Mr. Gerald Lee, bronzed with travel and de-
cidedly distinguished-looking, bowed low over
Ritta's cold hand and gave her an indescrib-
ably curious glance from two dark, magnetic
eyes. She shivered and drew involuntarily
closer to Hugh.

"Mr. Desborough must not monopolize Miss
Lee. Such a charming young lady as your-
self should be generous in bestowing her at-
tentions. We have never met before; all my
father's relatives are unknown to me, but I
already love them for that dear father's sake."

With a rather exaggerated show of emotion
he wiped both eyes with a deep-bordered hand-
kerchief he carried.

Mrs. Larrabee had taken Mr. Desborough's
arm, and, in spite of the repulsion she felt for
this newly-acquired cousin, Ritta could not re-
fuse his escort into the parlors.

"Cousin Ritta," whispered her companion,
"I do not want you to hate me because I
have robbed you of your fortune. You were
born to wealth, Ritta, with your grace and
beauty. Our acquaintance is short, I am a
commonplace man, but money you know cov-
ers a multitude of sins, and our interests
should be one. Do not divulge the secret of
your loss of fortune at present and perhaps
you and I will share it together in the future."

Her puzzled face showed that she only half-
understood his meaning.

"Share it with me, Ritta; be my wife. I
will call and see your mother to-morrow."

All this he whispered with the same strange
light in his eyes, and an increasing familiarity
in his manner. Then, marking her frighten-
ed manner and beseeching look toward Hugh,
he added:

"Does your lover know of your changed
fortunes? He will never marry you now, a
poor, penniless girl. Well," with a sort of
patronizing kindness, "I have robbed you of
wealth, but have saved you from a worse fate."

"He does know of my changed fortunes,"
gasped Ritta, "and, Mr. Lee, you have no
right to take advantage of our relationship to
address me as you have. I may never marry.
I certainly would die before I sold myself for
gold!"

"Many willing victims sell themselves for
gold in these enlightened days," said her coun-
sin, with a significant lifting of the eyebrows in
Desborough's direction. "You will marry,
Ritta Lee, and marry me."

Just then a merry girl passed a golden cake
in their direction, and, as Ritta took a piece,
something round and bright rolled from it and
fell at Mr. Gerald Lee's feet.

"Ritta Lee!" screamed little Rose Lar-
abee. "Ritta has got the ring! Hurrah!
Can we all come to the wedding?"

Then there was much laughing and joking
at Ritta's expense, and Gerald Lee gallantly
bent and placed the golden fether upon Ritta's
third finger. The young people, as the mystic
hour of twelve arrived, led the way into the
large, old-fashioned kitchen, and then com-
menced numerous mysterious tricks, a duck-
ing for apples and a wild race around the street-
corner with mouths full of water, where nu-
merous names of their several beaux greeted
the ears of the delighted girls.

Sue came in, pale and breathless, from an
upper room where she had been peering in an
apple before a mirror, and where she distinctly
declared she had seen a man's face peeping in-
to the glass over her shoulder.

"Your husband, Sue. You'll be married
before the year's out!" cried the girls. "What
did he look like? Did you ever see him be-
fore?" and a number of like questions assailed
her ears.

Sue blushed a rosy red, and refused to an-
swer, while Dr. Gresham, silent and rather
grave, stood by her side and smiled in a quiet
sort of way. He said nothing of the practical
joke that no one of that noisy group would
dream him guilty of perpetrating. Years af-
terward he confessed to Sue the first *ruse* he
had made use of to gain her love.

Ritta's turn came, but she returned to the
kitchen with untroubled brow, and declared she
had seen nothing. On the side-table the girls
had placed three saucers containing, respectivel-
ly, earth, water, and a ring, and each one ad-
vanced blindfolded and touched one or another
of the mysterious symbols. Ritta turned pale
as Hugh felt uncertainly of the saucer contain-
ing the ring, and passing on, placed his fingers
in the earth.

Hugh laughed, but Ritta shuddered and
pressed a little closer to him as he came and
stood beside her.

"No fear, little one, of losing me—not at
least until I have worked and left you a rich
widow. Remember, darling, you are my prom-
ised bride, and must see no other face than
mine to-night."

"Ritta must go first to the lake. Are you
afraid, Ritta?" questioned a dozen gay voices.

"Afraid!" laughed Ritta. "How absurd,
girls! Where are my wraps?"

"An I go with her?" asked Hugh, anxiously.
"Go with her! No, foolish youth, you'd
break the charm," declared Mrs. Larrabee.
"She must go alone, and as she unwinds this
thread, must whisper to herself, three times:

"Oh, spirits bright, that rule the night,
Turn thine eyes upon my love,
Bring him to me, this night to see,
To gaze so tenderly from above."

Then she will see her future husband's face in
the water."

Ritta allowed herself to be persuaded, and
stepped just then the lonely road, the more readily
as Gerald Lee, the man she already hated, had
left the party some time before the company
had adjourned to the kitchen.

As she groped along in the semi-darkness,
her fingers trembled as she unwound the
thread, but she repeated the magic rhyme over
and over again, and kept steadily on toward
the lake shore.

On she walked till she reached the lake; sud-
denly she stumbled against some object on the
shore, and stopped short.

The moon came sailing out from behind a
cloud just then, the lonely road, the more readily
as Gerald Lee, the man she already hated, had
left the party some time before the company
had adjourned to the kitchen.

There, on the sand, face downward, lay the
body of a man, and, looking in the moonlit
water, Ritta saw reflected the ghastly features
of Hugh Desborough.

As she touched him she saw that her hand
was bathed in blood.

The place rung with her screams; she turned
the loved face over and covered it with her
passionate kisses.

There, a few moments later, she was found,
half crazed with grief, and calling upon Hugh,
by every endearing name, to awake and an-
swer her.

It was many a weary day before Ritta arose
from a sick bed, and walked with Hugh—poor
Hugh, ill and almost as pale as herself—up and
down the velvet lawn in front of her old,
pretty home.

Yes, it was Ritta's home still, shared now
with Hugh; and this is how it all came about:
Fearing for Ritta's safety that night, Hugh
had stolen away from the gay company and
taken a short cut to the lake. He half-con-
cealed himself behind a boat and waited for
Ritta to appear.

Soon he heard voices, loud and angry, ap-
proaching, and, advancing toward him, follow-
ing in a threatening way by a ruffian-looking
fellow, came Gerald Lee.

"I tell you, Smith, this thing must be stop-
ped. I've the devil of a temper, and I warn you
not to goad me too far!"

"It's only my share of the swag I'm want-
ing, my fine gentleman. Give me half, and I
won't peach."

"Half! Idiot! of what are you thinking?
I take all the risks and mean to pocket the
gains!" then, in a more conciliatory voice, as
he noted the angry scowl deepening on his
companion's face, "but I'll do the fair thing
by you, Smith. How would—well, say five
thousand, do? That would set you up nicely
in some business."

"Grand setting up! And you come nicely
into half a million! Guess you don't come it
on this covale. I'll peach and go over on the
gal's side fast!"

"Well, tell your lies then, and Gerald Lee,
Esq., rich and respected, will snap his fingers
in your face and dare you to do your worst!"

"Dare me, do you, Mr. Gerald Lee?" with
a mocking emphasis on the name. "I swear
I'll run you. I'll tell the whole devilish plot—
how you, a poor, low-born valet, robbed your
dying master of his papers, and your fortune
and name be'n't your own, and your mother
wasn't."

"Hold your lying tongue, you black villain!
If those words should be heard we're both un-
done."

He stood quite near to Hugh, who was lying
flat on his back in the shadow of the boat, and
Smith, in his half-drunken rage, came forward
and struck his comrade full in the face. Lee
accepted the challenge, closed with his antagon-
ist, and they both fell over Hugh's prostrate
figure.

Lee recognized Desborough's face, and then
ensued a struggle for life.

Hugh was young and strong, but not match
for two desperate villains. They left him for
dead on the sands, and ran, just as Ritta's
light steps were heard coming toward them.

Of course search was made for the man per-
sonating Gerald Lee, but only Smith, wounded
and bleeding, was found in a neighboring farm-
house. His more guilty comrade escaped, and
no news of her absent "cousin" ever reached
Ritta's ears.

The old, gable-pointed house resounds now
with baby laughter and children's voices, and
Ritta is still the envied, beautiful heiress of the
Lee estate; but she is sure of one thing, she
declares, and that is that her husband never
married her for money.

In the Stocks.

A CAMP-FIRE YARN.

BY OLL COOMES.

"SPEAKIN' of the prairie stocks bein' an aw-
ful faze, reminds me that it's nothin' compared
with what my grandfather got into once," said
old Pete Losh, the trapper, as he dropped a
red coal from the palm of his horny hand into
his pipe. "It war away back in Ohio, in the
days of Ingins and blood, that my grandfide,
then a chunk of a boy of twenty, lived with
his parents on Jonathan's creek. The Loshs
had settled there along with two or three other
families in a little clearin' in the almighty
woods. The Ingins war not the quietest neigh-
bors on yearth; howsoever, they contented
themselves by stealin' sich things as they want-
ed, from time to time. But, finally, they stole
the old family horse, Baltimore, that had been
in the Losh family for ages, and you may bet
the blood of the family began to bile and bub-
ber. My ole granddad took his musket and
struck out, and finally ran across a savage
aboard of the ole heirloom, Baltimore; and so
he up and plugged a bullet into his system
and got the hoss back. The Shawnees, how-
ever, knew who'd sent their friend across the
Jordan, and swore vengeance on my grand-
father."

"The ole codger dodged 'em for some time,
but at last he fell into their clutches. It war
along in June when the sap war up in the
trees, that the pioneers used to cut down big
chestnut trees and chop off 'cuts' say from
five to ten feet long. These 'cuts' they would
split in two, then by poundin' the bark a little
it would peel off whole and sound, and then
thard'd be the slickest trough in the world. All
you'd have to do would be to board up the
ends and see that it dried out just right."

"Wal, one awful hot day my ancient grand-
father went out